

FRONT: PETER HILL'S STRIKE DIARY • 6 / FILM: FALLING ANGELS • 42 / ARTS: KIDD PIVOT • 49

EDMONTON'S 100% INDEPENDENT NEWS & ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY

VUEWEEKLY

THE FLOOR

LIVING WITH AUTONOMY OFF/ON

[BY JERED STUFFCO • 35]



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WHEN: Thursday,
December 4 at 7 pm
WHERE: SUB on the U of A campus in the Alumni Room
(main floor SUB)



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ON THE COVER

Jered Stuffco's profile of Edmonton quartet the Floor is full of details about the band's approach to recording music and the dramatic shift their sound took between their first EP, *Doll*, and their new one, *Autonomy Off/On*. And since Jered actually shares a bathroom with the lead singer, there might be some juicy details about his personal hygiene as well! • 35

FRONT

How Peter Hill found himself carrying a picket sign • 6



FILM

I shot the seraphs: *Falling Angels* director Scott Smith • 42



yourVUE

So SU us

In the November 6 VuePoint, "Cap in hand," Shannon Phillips pointed out some issues she had with the student-run Bill 43 campaign and suggested that the University of Alberta Students' Union had not been "doing its job" in regards to the campaign. To the contrary, the Students' Union has worked relentlessly to inform both the public and the student body on the consequences of the bill, should it be passed.

As a leader in the largest coalition of Alberta students ever assembled, the Students' Union has strived to inform the government and students how detrimental Bill 43 will be for Alberta. Several events were run on campus, including a five-storey banner drop. We've gone through over 1,000 informational pamphlets and are printing several hundred more. Many students, along with their elected officials, visited

MLA's offices in an effort to inform the public and make sure the government understands that it is not just a select group of students who are against major portions of Bill 43.

But it has not been enough, which is why the Students' Union is keeping up the pressure. We performed a political satire, entitled "A Bill 43 Fable," on the steps of the legislature on November 18 at noon, a part of our public outcry against Bill 43.

However our job is not merely to encourage public debate, but to effect the best change that we can for our constituents, the students at the U of A. To do this we have been running a campaign that has included the aforementioned posters, banners and pamphlets, but we have also been attempting to gain the ear of lawmakers to change what needs to be changed through concerted lobby efforts.

Bill 43 is a direct threat to post-secondary education in Alberta. Calling for the virtual removal of the tuition cap currently in place—which

ARTS

Choreographer Christine Pite, the fulcrum of Kidd Pivot • 49



states that a university, college or technical institute can only have tuition make up 30 per cent of what it spends each year—Bill 43 will guarantee that the trend of rising tuition will continue, driving a post-secondary education out of reach of those who are not extremely wealthy or willing to go deeply into debt.

Anyone who believes that a public post-secondary education should be accessible to all Albertans should stand up and make their voice heard by talking to their friends, their family and their MLA. —MAT BRECHTEL, PRESIDENT, U OF A STUDENTS' UNION

Vue Weekly welcomes reader response, both positive and negative. Send your opinion by mail (*Vue Weekly*, 1030-108 Street, Edmonton, AB, T5J 1L7), by fax ((780) 426-2889) or by e-mail (letters@vue.ab.ca). Preference is given to feedback about articles in *Vue Weekly*; we reserve the right to edit letters for length and clarity. Please include a daytime telephone number.

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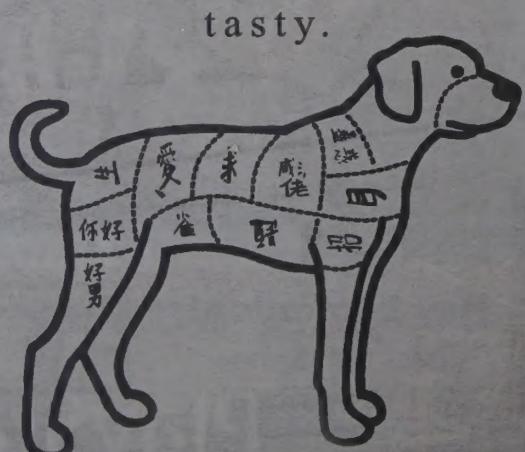
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Hill's street blues

The second in a series of A-Channel strike stories

BY PETER HILL

If you've ever sat there flicking through the channels at unusual hours, you've probably seen me. And heard me. For the last 13 years, I've been working as a comical commentator on several Edmonton television stations, including Videotron, Access and Shaw. Five years ago, I also began producing segments that A-Channel runs during its Saturday morning kids' programs.

When the A-Channel strike began more than two months ago, I considered not taking sides. I thought about being neither a striker nor a "replacement worker" (otherwise known as a scab—although not the kind that clings to your flesh wounds). For a brief moment, I pictured myself reading newspapers and sipping slushies while waiting for the strike to end. But the thought of letting my co-workers fight the fight without me, then returning to work when it was over to reap the rewards, didn't sit well. Walking away from the dispute instantly walked away as an option.

Since when did I, Peter Hill, not voice his thoughts and feelings? It's because I've done exactly that for 13 years on TV that I get asked to sign autographs. Daily. What about the people who tell me to keep it real? Can I tell them I don't stand for anything? No one would buy it.

On the night A-Channel employees voted overwhelmingly to go on strike, I still didn't believe we actually would. Last-minute negotiations

with management would bridge the tiny chasm between us, I firmly believed. Never did I see myself standing on the picket line outside of A-Channel. Being a self-declared Social Credit Christian soldier, I've never voted for a political party that supports unions, nor have I ever been a member of one.

Watching on-air hosts who crossed the picket line being driven around by intimidating guards in white SUVs with blacked-out windows while co-workers yelled "shame" was over the top—even for me. I may not have combed my hair for 10 years, but I still wasn't ready for that. When you're being escorted by tough guys in a vehicle and people are screaming at you... might this mean you've made a mistake? How everyone will work together after this strike is over remains unclear.

ON MY FIRST DAY manning the picket line, the moment I truly dreaded happened. Managers spotted me on the line with a sign. Truth be known, I like these guys and am proud when they compliment me on my work. I think it's understandable, though, that I want more money for my own future children;



it's not enough to entertain other people's kids. I understand that the company can't provide me with a girlfriend/wife/mother-of-my-future-kids—no progress in that struggle either—but surely a raise would help me find them and provide them with a nest.

Why am I standing in front of my managers with a picket sign when we're not far from an agreement?

The cost of this labour dispute is gigantic compared to that of a new contract. The company's bill for lawyers, strike-breaking guards and lost commercial revenues is enough to pay Peter Hill until Armageddon. As a bare-bones minimalist—no house, no TV, no computer, no car—I can't comprehend why anyone would spend all this money and eventually have to sign a contract with the union anyway.

DURING A RECENT TRIP to a picket line outside of the A-Channel station Calgary, which is not unionized, I was pleasantly surprised to be confronted by public support

death of our culture." But even if you take a less apocalyptic view of the developments on your local magazine rack, you've got to admit there's something counterintuitive about honouring a publication as willfully subliterate as *Lucky* with the title "Magazine of the Year." Reading your first issue of *Lucky*—and I use the term "reading" loosely—is a bewildering experience. There are almost no articles in the conventional sense, and hardly any of those are bylined. Less a magazine than a catalogue, the typical page of *Lucky* consists of eight or nine photos of various clothes, fashion accessories and cosmetics, accompanied by few brief, gushing words of praise, a price and a phone number you can call to order the product.

The November column by beauty editor Jean Godfrey-June contains shameless lines like "Meanwhile in the JLo department, you will be completely unable to resist her beyond-appealing, incredibly wearable new perfume." The back-page "Fashion Babble" column by Andrea Linett is

"*Lucky* creates an editorial environment that is, essentially, all about marketers," writes *Advertising Age*'s Jon Fine, "making for a pretty formidable commerce machine." That cozy relationship with its advertisers is what troubles most media critics about *Lucky*—the magazine is sort of what *Consumer Reports* would be like if it consisted of nothing but recommendations (and then sold ads for all the

instead of contempt. I expected the so-called "redneck" Calgarians to boo, hiss, flip the bird and throw empty coffee cups out of car windows at me. Instead, they gave me the thumbs-up, friendly waves and even one defiant, skyward-raised fist from a transit rider. Not one bus driver missed the chance to honk—they're unionized too, you know. In the first moments of our picketing, I found four autograph-seeking fans from Calgary I didn't know I had. Our Calgary cousins were more polite and friendly than us rowdy Redmontonians. Since that trip to Calgary, the myth that Albertans are stupid cowboys has been permanently erased from my admittedly creative imagination.

Being a no-show on TV is the only difficult thing about this strike for me. Living by humble means seems natural and right to me, but everywhere I go people ask me when I'll be back on the air and when the strike will be over. Unfortunately, I have no answers. I wonder when making programs for viewers and the sheer joy of being creative will come before politics. Soon, I hope.

\$300 skirts it was recommending). But that's also the genius of *Lucky*—the way *Lucky*'s editors have figured out a way to talk about these products not in the language of advertising but as if they were all personal discoveries they can't wait to share with their readers, as if passing along a tip to their girlfriends. All one million of them.

This is the Magazine of the Year? 232 pages of glossy ads? A magazine that has essentially eliminated the need for writers? A magazine that sees the world as nothing more than "a series of products to be consumed"? The magazine that inspired all those obnoxious eye-candy photo spreads of nifty new products that have started popping up in all sorts of magazines—including the weekly *Lucky*-style photo feature James Kershaw does for *Ed!* The online magazine *Gawker* prophesized the creation in a few years of *Lucky*-style magazines like *Catherine Zeta-Jones's Shoes*. "An all-pictorial mag of CZ-J's feet and footwear, with

media
jungle

BY PAUL MATWYSHUK

O Lucky mag!

"I can see why people would think that it means the magazine world is going to hell when this really hot magazine is a magazine without paragraphs."

That's how Kim France reacted to the news that *Advertising Age* magazine had declared *Lucky*, the magazine she founded and edits, their 2003 "Magazine of the Year." France isn't the only person to do a double-take at the news: *Folio* columnist Simon Dumenco once referred to magazines like *Lucky* as a sign of nothing less than the "soul



ACTIVISM

Will Food Not Bombs be defused?

EDMONTON—In our province of plenty, oil is bursting through the ground and, apparently, there's so much food it's rotting. Last Saturday, thousands of Edmontonians spent a couple of million dollars to sit outside in the cold and watch the warm, fuzzy spectacle of Gretzky in a toque playing old-school hockey. As one *Edmonton Journal* writer put it, the sight was moving enough "to make an old Oilers fan shed icy tears." A few blocks away from Commonwealth Stadium, I was shedding icy tears for a different reason.

Bruised on one side but shiny-smooth on the other, a perfectly edible apple rolls into the cold hands of a hungry man. Garbage bags full of lettuce are rifled through and hopeful eyes follow two young men passing out stale bagels. The frigid November air bites my exposed skin as I approach this scene outside the Boyle Street Co-op. The building's interior is being painted today, so the kitchen is out of commission and members of the anti-poverty group Food Not Bombs must hand out food that would normally be served cooked up as a hot meal.

Since May of 1995, the Edmonton chapter of Food Not Bombs has been rescuing discarded food from restaurants, grocery stores and bakeries, serving hungry people outside City Hall, in downtown pedways, at musical gigs and now at the Boyle Street Co-op. The local prong of this international movement has had a myriad of volunteers and supporters over the years—and, of course, its struggles too. These days, volunteer numbers are dropping because several original members and leaders are leaving Edmonton. There are concerns that FNB might not be able to make it through this period of instability and there's a significant need for new volunteers. Because it's such a loosely-organized group, when long-time members leave the impact is especially devastating. And because FNB has been focused on staying alive of late, there hasn't been much time or energy to do outreach work to attract new helpers.

"With most volunteer work, there's too much bureaucracy," says FNB member Manuel Ulliac, who's been with the group for about a year. "But we're straight-up, simply getting food and giving it to the people."

FNB's direct approach has also led to difficulties obtaining food and serving it in public. In 1995, the group locked into a space in City Hall but was evicted in 1997 because it wasn't a legally registered not-for-profit society. "We're not a soup kitchen," says Chris Germain, who's been with FNB for roughly seven years. "We serve out in public so the problem is not hidden and so different social classes and backgrounds can meet each other."

Like city council, managers of some

CONRAD BLACK



supermarket chains won't recognize FNB as a legitimate group either and won't donate food that's being thrown out (so they're not liable to charges of food poisoning). But FNB members assure me the chances of someone getting ill from their meals are slim, because only vegetarian and vegan food is served and any bit of rotten or moldy food is carefully cut away. FNB was started in 1980 by anti-nuclear war activists in Cambridge, Massachusetts. They wanted to protest the amount of money being spent on war while people go hungry. According to FNB's international website (www.foodnotbombs.net), 26 per cent of household food in North America goes to waste.

Anyone interested in volunteering in Edmonton can contact the group through foodnotbomb.iscool.net. —
SHERYL CARLSON

BUSINESS

EDE report pray for chaos

EDMONTON—A new report from Economic Development Edmonton predicts short-term bliss for the city but warns that tougher times may be ahead.

Thanks to rising oil prices and increased drilling activity in Edmonton's sphere of influence, EDE president Allan Scott reported that this area will have the strongest growth of any Canadian city in 2004. "Our economy has proved resilient in the face of BSE and other negative economic factors in 2003," Scott says, "and with stronger economic growth in the U.S., greater Edmonton's economy should continue to roll in the next several years."

The TD Bank Financial Group was also quoted in the study, stating that the average income in the Calgary/Edmonton corridor was \$40,000 per year, 10 per cent higher than the national average, making these two cities the only urban centres in Canada where residents' per capita wealth is comparable to that of major U.S. centres. But the report says there are many uncertainties

that could scuttle economic growth in the region. While drilling is on the rise, there are fears that exploration may soon be curtailed simply because it's becoming harder to find new oil deposits in a region that has already been exhaustively explored. Moreover, there are fears that continuing American embargoes on Alberta beef products thanks to the mad cow scare could do long-term damage to that industry, too.

There are also worries that the construction business could slow down soon—housing starts remain strong in the area, but EDE reports that many of its forecasters are predicting an imminent slowdown in the home-building business. Those starts could drop even further with the slowdown of migration to Alberta, a trend that began in the middle of this year.

Ironically, the report suggests that many of these economic worries would be negated if American troops continue to meet fierce resistance in Iraq and the Middle East remains in chaos. A cold winter and a continued American economic recovery would also stimulate prices. "If the current instability in Iraq and elsewhere in the region were to worsen, it is possible oil prices will rise," the report says. "If oil prices increase for any of these reasons, the short-term economic impact for Alberta will be positive. Business and consumers will take a hit from high energy costs but the Alberta government would also experience windfall revenue surpluses."

In other words, more chaos in Iraq equals more profit for Alberta, regardless of how the province chooses to spend it. —STEVEN SANDOR

EDUCATION

Ontario gov't maintains tuition cap

TORONTO—For years, students' unions across Canada have been trying (and failing) to convince provincial governments to freeze tuition levels in order to keep education affordable—and for

years they've gotten little to no results. But recent developments in Ontario offer new hope, with the province's newly elected Liberal government announcing this week that it will make good on its campaign promise to freeze rising tuition fees for college and university students in the next academic year.

According to a report in the *Excalibur*, the student newspaper at York University in Toronto, the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Learning has declared that they will freeze tuition at the fall 2003 level for next year. This policy goes one step further than the old PC government's tuition cap of 2000, which prevented schools from raising tuition more than two per cent a year for five years. Fall 2004 would have been the last semester affected by the PC cap, so the freeze comes as good news for many Ontario students' unions.

But, of course, some teensy little details remain to be ironed out, like, say, how universities will manage to continue operating without increasing revenue from tuition. Ministry spokeswoman Linda Chiavresco could not confirm how the Ontario government plans to offset this decrease in university revenue, but she did say that the government will be working with the institutions and students to resolve the issue. "We'll be collaborating with our partners," she said, "to find real and lasting solutions to how post-secondary education will be funded."

Regardless of the news, the students' union at York remains largely unimpressed. According to Pablo Vivanco, the vice-president external for the York Federation of Students, the freeze will mean nothing if quality of education is not maintained. "Students would not be in favour of a tuition freeze without the government putting in more funds to ensure quality," he said.

Uh-oh! Turns out that a quality education costs money, huh? Oh well—that's okay as long as anyone and everyone but the student body has to pay for it. —CHRIS BOUTER

By DAN RUBINSTEIN

A wing and a scare

When David Miller was elected to serve as Toronto's new mayor earlier this month, he was the lone front-running candidate who opposed the expansion of the city's island airport. The business community, developers and the other four would-be mayors all wanted to build a bridge and supersize the small commuter airport on Toronto Island, which is a short ferry ride away from the downtown core. Calling instead for waterfront revitalization, Miller rode this key issue to victory.

Granted, comparing Toronto to Edmonton is like comparing the Big Apple to Orange County, but as debate over our City Centre Airport bubbles over it's worth taking a look at Toronto. It is the largest city in Canada, you know; they may not have any oil, but they do a bit of business there too. Moreover, Toronto's Pearson International Airport may not be quite as remote distance-wise as the Edmonton International Airport—which takes a whole 20 minutes to reach down Highway 2—but it's a pain to get to the edge of Toronto from downtown, especially during rush hour. But did Miller back down from threats that business folk would fly elsewhere? No. He knows people come to Toronto because they have to go to the provincial capital for conferences, meetings and schmoozing, suburban airport and all.

Here in Edmonton, the threats are coming from all sides: from northern Alberta cities, from the provincial government and from companies based everywhere between the North Pole and Tierra del Fuego, it seems. Close the City Centre Airport, they're saying, and the "Gateway to the North" will be shut. "Flying into City Centre are key businesspeople who make the big decisions and sign the big contracts," a spokeswoman for a lobby group called Air Service for Tomorrow said in a recent release. "Edmonton needs them! Closing the City Centre Airport to small scheduled aircraft services just gives businesspeople another reason to do business elsewhere—Calgary, Vancouver, Saskatoon—with people who want them to feel welcome and wanted."

It's easy to poke holes in that logic. If you work up north for an oil company and need to meet with the provincial government, odds are you have to do it in Edmonton. So you'll come here anyway, despite the inconvenience. What's more, if permitting passenger flights to continue landing at City Centre means that some affordable commercial flights to the north are cancelled, why should the transportation options of the majority be sacrificed for the convenience of the wealthy minority? ☀

Haiku Horoscope

ARIES

(Mar 21-Apr 19)
Something has to give
The smart money is not on
Scrooge but on Santa



LIBRA

(Sept 23-Oct 22)
Though they may be called
"Safety" pins, they do not make
Great presents for kids



TAURUS

(Apr 20-May 20)
You know what they say:
Every time that a bell rings
Dogs will attack you



SCORPIO

(Oct 23-Nov 21)
It's the Chanukah
Horoscope! Quit possessing
Me, Adam Sandler



GEMINI

(May 21-June 20)
Your sex appeal is
Somehow only increased by
Your creepy dead stare



SAGITTARIUS

(Nov 22-Dec 21)
You will be given
A magic set for Xmas
And burned as a witch



CANCER

(June 21-July 22)
Now that you have a
Harimock get a gorilla
Suit and don't ask why



CAPRICORN

(Dec 22-Jan 19)
So you are dreaming
Of a white Christmas? I'll bet
You are, you racist



LEO

(July 23-Aug 22)
Instead of stealing
A car stereo, why not
Steal the whole damn car?



AQUARIUS

(Jan 20-Feb 18)
Before you free your
Mind and express yourself you
Should put on some pants



VIRGO

(Aug 23-Sept 22)
This week, take some time
To think of all the things that
Grow on your toothbrush



PISCES

(Feb 19-Mar 20)
'Tis the season to
Quit being so jolly and
Get out of my face



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Quentin gnashes futilely at the ropes...



Billy grabs the felled guard's weapon, but is suddenly seized by a paralyzing fear!



Consumed with fright, he works out the screws to a vent...



Captured! Billy awakens to find himself in Dr. Venom's hideout!



...and Billy hatches an ill-fated plan!



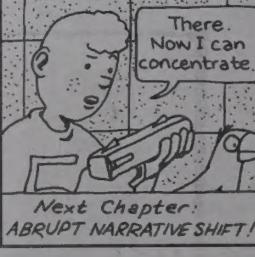
He hesitantly crawls through a maze of ducts!



There's no hope of escape!



The situation is utterly hopeless! He considers giving up.



Next Chapter: ABRUPT NARRATIVE SHIFT!

m
Grant
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interactive, holographic one-touch purchasing." (They're being satirical, of course, but a male version of *Lucky*, entitled *Cargo*, is scheduled to roll out in a few months.)

Advertising Age editor Scott Donaton, on the other hand, sees *Lucky* as a true innovator in the publishing field and credits it with virtually "inventing a genre." "I recognize and respect the magazine's ability to attract an audience—circulation is approaching one million—and an advertising base," he writes. "There's no reason for even a media snob to begrudge magazines such as *Lucky* their success. Their growth doesn't come at the expense of thought-leader titles; the *Atlantic* and the *New Yorker* are doing quite well on their own, thank you. You also have to admire *Lucky*'s honesty. It doesn't pretend to be something it's not, filling pages between its fashion spreads with health articles. Nor is it self-conscious about what it is. It's a magazine about shopping. Period.... *Lucky* proudly presents its offering and encourages readers to whip the magazine out on the train rather than treating it as a guilty bedroom pleasure."

Economist subscribers might blanch at Donaton's logic, but it's worth noting

that when *Advertising Age* ranks the year's top magazines, they're not judging them on the strength of their editorial content so much as they're deciding how well each publication fulfills the needs of its readership. Their top 10 magazines of 2003 are, in order, *Lucky*, *Real Simple*, *CosmoGirl*, *The*

ton and *Advertising Age* have taken to deciding what makes a good magazine—people should read it because they want to and find it useful (like *Lucky*), not because they think they feel obligated to plow grimly through it, no matter how stultifying the content (like, say, *The Walrus*).

And you've got to hand it to Kim France and publisher Sandy Golinkin: *Lucky* is close to a perfectly executed magazine. The pages are bright and colourful; the data about each product is clearly presented and the service articles (which party clothes will disguise your flaws, which coats are right for you, imaginative ways to dress up a sweater) may be superficial, but for what they are, they're informative and helpful. It seems a little perverse, in fact, to complain about the lack of text accompanying these articles; after all, aren't photos a much more effective vehicle for offering fashion advice?

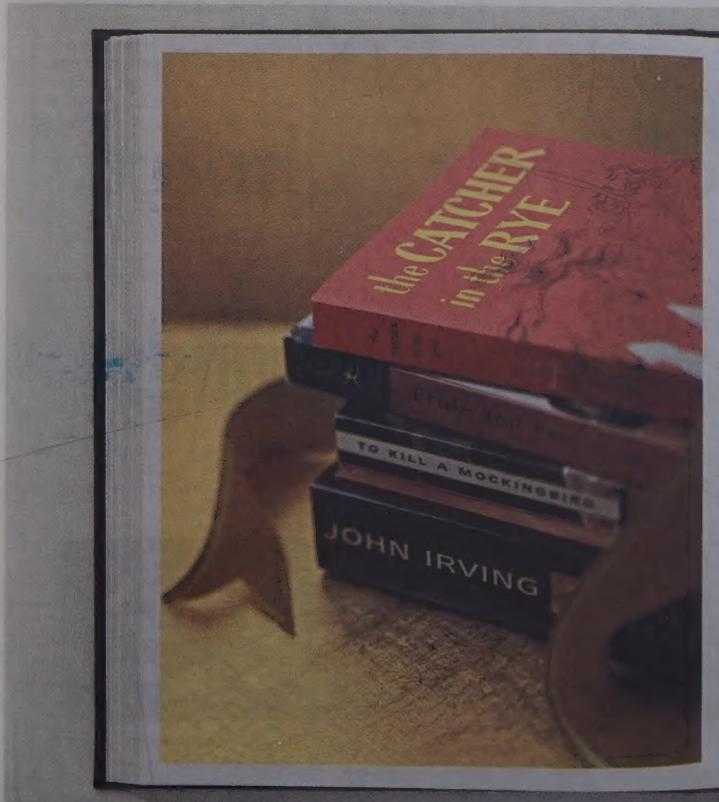
"All I ever tried to do was to fulfill a need, and by doing that I wasn't trying to squash anything meaningful in our culture," France told *Advertising Age*. Of course, even she sometimes worries that she's created a Frankenstein monster. "Does my jaw drop in focus groups," France went on to say, "where women look at the 'Ask the Editors' column and say, 'I don't want to read that page because there's too much text there?' Yes. That freaks me the hell out." ☀



Atlantic Monthly, *Cooking Light*, *ESPN: The Magazine*, *Essence*, *More*, *Men's Health* and *Details*. That's a great, eclectic array of quality publications, and I like the open-minded approach Dona-

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IN THE BOX
The Elephant and Castle on Whyte's

BY DAVID YOUNG
AND JOHN TURNER

Not much happened this past week for the Oilers. Only the first-ever outdoor hockey game in NHL history, complete with Wayne Gretzky, Mark Messier, Guy Lafleur and, of course, Kenny "The Rat" Linseman in an alumni exhibition game. And the Oilers beat the Toronto Maple Leafs in the first game at the newly-christened Rexall Place. And the Oilers tied Columbus Tuesday 3-3. Dave and John discuss what was possibly the most interesting week in Oiler history.

John: The weekend is over and everything now seems a little anticlimactic. I don't think any of the fans who stayed for both games, even though it was close to -20°C, complained about the chilly temperatures. It was a day filled with fond memories and reminders of an era when so many NHL stars played on one team. Could you imagine that today, Dave? Aside from the New York Rangers, could any team afford such a line-up?

Dave: Well, the Semenko/Linseman/McSorley line Sather put together for the second half of the Alumni Game was certainly a throwback to the old days and a combination we'll probably never see again. With Kenny Linseman getting a goal and an assist, I

was hoping he would earn penalty minutes as well. We could call the combo a "Rat Trick." The goons were the highlight of the event. You wouldn't see three players like that in today's NHL. As difficult as it is to put a bunch of scorers together, putting three agitators together on one line—let alone one team—is rare. The NHL is so intent on "cleaning up" hockey that they have forgotten the special place tough guys have in the hearts of hockey fans.

John: What stood out in a lot of people's minds on Saturday was the vintage save that Fuhr made on Stephane Richer, his legs split as his right glove hand shot into the air to make the catch. How often have fans seen that in Edmonton since Grant Fuhr's heyday? And even though the ice conditions didn't allow for the crisp passing and high scoring that was expected from these players, I don't imagine anyone was disappointed. No one from the Montreal organization had a negative word to say about the entire event and there was every indication that another outdoor game is in the NHL's future.

Dave: Well, I was in the stands for the game, John. I wasn't sitting in the comfortable press area. It was damn cold out there. I appreciated the streaker's juke and jive on the sidelines as it provided a great opportunity for a

warm belly laugh and a chance to appreciate having testicles outside your body. I talked to a few people in the stands and, despite the cold weather, we all felt proud of the city and the commitment to hockey which resulted in well over 57,000 people attending the game and probably 40,000 of them staying until the end. This wouldn't happen in Toronto or Vancouver. We're insane here in Edmonton.

John: The game that mattered in the standings was played in less-than-ideal conditions but in the end, the brittle ice and the bouncing puck just added to the whole outdoor experience. It would have been nice if the Oil had beaten Montreal but it was still a great day for hockey. I guess Edmonton played in a couple of other games this past week but I think you'll agree that the only game that mattered was the one played outside on Saturday night on *Hockey Night in Canada*.

Dave: I'll never forget Saturday afternoon for two reasons. First, it was an unprecedented day of hockey. Wayne Gretzky in an Oilers jersey? Goosebumps. Second, it was too cold to drink too much. I can't forget a single moment. November 22 is trapped in the old brain bucket for posterity. No blackouts; no fuzzy memories. I think my toes just warmed up late Monday night. It was worth it. After the Oilers finish their short road trip, though, they'll come home to "Rexall Place" instead of "Skyreach Centre." I just got used to the last name change. And before anyone else steals a bad pun from me, here goes: from now on, when visiting teams come to Edmonton and lose a game, it "Rexall" their plans. ☺

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print culture

By CHRISTOPHER WIEBE

Natural born Gillers

My attendance at the Giller Prize Gala in Toronto and the Governor General's Literary Awards presentation in Ottawa earlier this month has left me with a series of speculations and flighty impressions.

One of the first things I noticed in the run-up to both awards was that the prizes—their process and impact, adjudication structure, the personalities and politics involved—generated far more press attention than the shortlisted books. I wondered why, until I realized that awards are always about themselves, or rather about reaffirming the spirit of their original "purpose." The Giller and GG's, then, both celebrate two stories of literary creation in Canada: the story of cultural nationalism, and the development of the books and cultural industry. Each prize emphasizes these stories to differing degrees, and you can probably see each award's pre-occupations expressed most clearly in their guest lists.

After being greeted at the door by founder Jack Rabinovitch and event organizer Elana Rabinovitch, I proceed to the Four Seasons Hotel ballroom, where the Giller Prize Gala begins with cocktails. As the space filled with 450 mingling bodies, it quickly becomes unnavigable: TV personalities and executives, newspaper columnists, retired politicians, creative writing professors, literary editors, established Toronto writers by the bushel. Anxious "Do I know you?" glances are cast. Here and there, TV cameras capture "persons of interest" in metallic pools of light. This kind of a gathering is beyond nametags; it's more about confirming relationships than developing new ones. The nominated writers, generally shy types, do not "work the room" but cling to a few friends (their publisher and agent on either side for authority) and let the "professional networkers" approach them.

Inside the ballroom, I find myself at a table that included writers Rohinton Mistry and Jane Urquhart, artist Tony Urquhart and Coach House Press founder Stan Bevington. It turns out Bevington is a native of Edmonton who as a student designed the Ross Shepherd High thunderbird logo and at Coach House printed blotting papers for LSD in between print runs of avant-garde poetry. Too busy moving between tables chatting, few people pay attention to the meal (pan-seared salmon with cilantro pesto). Since it was the Giller Prize's 10th anniversary, part of the evening was devoted to looking back at how the award had helped raise the profile of Canadian fiction—even (debatably) that it has elevated the quality of Canadian writing.

You look around at the Giller (and the GGs are no different) and the average age of those attending is fiftysomething; Toronto novelist Russell

Smith and CBC television host Jian Ghomeshi represent the thirtysomethings. That said, it is a rich, invigorating amalgam of people (largely from the "culture region" of Toronto) who have distinguished themselves in a range of cultural fields. The Giller's unwritten *raison d'être* is to bring together an arts community that rarely acknowledges its interdependence.

If the Giller is a cultural community's night out, the GG Awards presentation a week later is about the methodical affirmation of cultural nationalism. Convened in the subdued elegance of the Governor General's residence, Rideau Hall, the tone is much quieter. The guests are comprised of friends of the recipients, a variety of government functionaries and a smattering of previous winners. The TV cameras are corralled in a side corner, there is a string ensemble, deep pile carpets and room to wander. The award winners have already been announced in the morning, so the awards presentation relies not on shortlist competition to buoy the evening, but on the gravitas and ritual of conferment.

Founded in 1937 by Governor General and bestselling novelist John Buchan, the GGs are, by design, more expansive and earnest than the Giller. They honour seven genres in both official languages and they have the heft of history. The story of cultural nationalism reverberates through Adrienne Clarkson's address, in which she explains how Buchan, in founding the awards, envisioned what Canada could be. "The reason he established the awards," she says, "was he believed literature could be a pure imaginative

force in national life." Canada Council director John Hobday talks of how "we see ourselves through the eyes of our writers, as does the wider world," and how the Council sees its work as "creating conditions of possibility." In fact, the story of cultural nationalism is embedded in the translation awards—English to French, French to English—that acknowledge the linguistic mediation of the two founding nations.

By thematic coincidence, Douglas Glover's *Elle*, winner of the award for English fiction, is a re-imagining of Canada's past. "*Elle* is about the way the modern country of Canada began," Glover says in his acceptance speech. "I wrote the book because I love the place. It irritates the hell out of me about every other day. But I love it. It's my metaphor, my Dulcinea. It's the reference by which I explain all other things, love, the self, beauty, God and mystery. In my books, characters come to Canada to be changed and saved."

Martiniquan writer Patrick Chamoiseau has said that for a national literature to grow it needs writers, literary critics and an audience. Though awards are unreliable assessments of "the best," they are not pointless. Both the Giller and GGs expose the system of hidden cultural entities—funders, cultural commentators, etc.—that help "literary genius" find an audience. The Giller is about a cultural community in its broadest sense; the GGs are about something more rarefied and intellectualized, about, as John Ralston Saul said to the winners, "becoming a part of an encrustation of ideas, a part of something larger." ■

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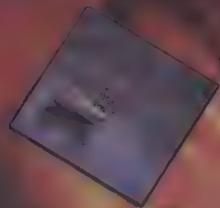
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BY RICHARD BURNETT

I like Dykes

I last spoke with dyke icon Alison Bechdel three years ago. Back then, current U.S. Democratic presidential candidate Howard Dean was the governor of Vermont and Bechdel, author of the groundbreaking comic strip *Dykes to Watch Out For*, was one of Vermont's best-known residents.

Vermont is also the state that most closely resembles the Great White North. ("That's a great honour!" Bechdel says.) It's progressive, it's snowy and it legalized same-sex civil unions years ago. Now, after the Massachusetts high court ruled on November 18 that state legislators have six months to legalize same-sex marriage, Howard Dean is taking the same-sex marriage debate to Washington, D.C.

"It had to happen eventually," Bechdel says. "We went through this a few years ago with Vermont's civil union bill so it's hard to get excited about it now."

What Bechdel is excited about is landing a new publisher for her 10th anthology of comic strips, the just-published, must-read *Dykes and Other Sundry Carbon-Based Life-Forms to Watch Out For* (Alyson Books), which collects strips from 1999 to 2002. When her previous publisher, Firebrand Books, went belly-up, Bechdel says, "I freaked. It was demoralizing, my books were out of print and financially it was really scary."

Bechdel's 20-year-old comic strip runs in more than 50 publications worldwide and she's sold more than 200,000 books. "But I never thought this would be my career," she says. "When I started out, my mom was not happy. Her first response was 'You're not going to do this under your own name, are you?' She came around, though, and is now really supportive. She says she's proud of me."

Bechdel, 43, is now writing an autobiographical graphic novel about her relationship with her late dad, which she expects will be published in spring 2005. "I didn't find out until I came out to my parents [when I was 19] that my dad was gay too," she says. "I was extremely confused because the shoe was on the other foot. The book is my figuring it out. I'm getting there."

Bechdel, meanwhile, is thrilled to see Paige Braddock's five-year-old lesbian comic strip *Jane's World* getting a

trial run in the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* daily, starting this past September. "There should be a gay daily strip," Bechdel says, "because newspapers are supposed to reflect the lives of everyone. *Jane's World* is not a political strip—it's a gentle, sweet, funny, slice-of-life strip which is perfect for the dailies."

Then there's cartoonist Aaron McGruder's *The Boondocks* strip about the lives of several black kids, which on October 12 had a week's worth of strips yanked by several papers, including the *Washington Post*, because it implied White House national security advisor Condoleezza Rice is a lesbian and needs to get laid—by a man. "Maybe if there was a man in the world who Condoleezza truly loved, she wouldn't be so hell-bent to destroy it," *Boondocks* character Caesar quips. "All that gal needs is some good ol'-fashioned lovin'!"

The Boondocks is one of Bechdel's favourite strips, but she tells me, "Even if

YOU KNOW, I'VE BEEN WORKING ON THIS ISSUE FOR YEARS, BUT I STILL CAN'T BELIEVE IT. I MEAN, ACTUALLY BEING ABLE TO GET MARRIED?!

NOT MARRIED. UNIONIZED. SOUNDS LIKE SOMETHING YOUD DO TO YOUR DRY CLEANING.



Alison Bechdel

Rice is a lesbian, McGruder sounds a bit unfair. I mean, maybe Bush needs a man."

As for Dubya, Bechdel says, "If he stays in office, things are definitely going to get worse. I was just in London and there were articles in the papers about how Europeans like Americans, just not American leadership. I don't know if that's true, but it's a comforting thought. I have a line where [my character] Mo says, 'Americans are for the most part repugnant.' And I think that's true."

Bechdel's been railing about politics in her column for 20 years and after all this time she now admits being concerned about her legacy. "I do feel that," she says. "I don't have children. So I cling to my body of work as a legacy. I never thought I'd care about that. [But] I want to make some kind of impression on the world, leave some kind of imprint."

She already has.

But what dykes everywhere really want to know is whether she and Mo still have the same haircut? "I've been struggling with my hair because I was tired of looking like a lesbian stereotype," Bechdel laughs. "First I let it grow out and now it's really short. I'm coming to embrace my stereotypicalness."

Feast your eyes on this

Tasty local outfits are on the menu

BY JULIANN WILDING



Stanley Carroll



Photos by Francis Tétrault



Gravity Pope



On Monday, November 24, the Savoy lounge on Whyte Avenue hosted an evening of fashions, fine dining and wine for Edmonton's most stylish (and slightly intoxicated) scenesters—Stanley Carroll's "Fashion Feast."

Carroll teamed up with Gravity Pope, who provided the footwear and presented the crowd with their own "Mini-Show" of outfits styled by Angela Brown. Her vision was

taken further with the help of Andor and his team of stylists from FUSS Art of Hair, whose creations sold me on the notion that pompadours are *definite fuckin' dos*.

STYLE

Then there was Carroll's collection: his European-influenced tailoring and use of bold yet basic

colours briefly transported the audience away from the ice-encrusted streets of Edmonton. Stanley likes lots and lots of fabric, as his slouchy pants, falling-off-the-shoulder necklines and floor-sweeping evening gowns would suggest, and his use of the cut and fall of stiff or coarse fabric creates intriguing silhouettes unlike that of any design group in the city. ☀

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"A revolution in education"

Local private school has no curriculum, no evaluations and just one rule

BY BRENDAN PROCÉ

"Is it bad?" asks Ric Rosborough. "Is running in the hallway bad?" Kassandra Lallemant, six years old, runs past us. When we leave for the gym, she asks if she can come too. So the three of us make our way there, Kassandra leading.

When we arrive, a couple of students are skateboarding on homemade ramps and a grind bar. Green Day booms from a stereo in the corner. "We like to keep the door open," Rosborough says about the winter air seeping into the gym. "It keeps it cool in here, so you don't get all stuck in your clothes." Makes sense. Don't want to sweat too much while you're at school.

The Indigo Sudbury Campus is a private school with 20 students co-founded and run by Rosborough and Nicolette Groeneveld. Both are former secondary school teachers with double-digit years of experience. But ISC, located just northwest of downtown Edmonton in a former elementary school that also houses an Edmonton Catholic School Board outreach program and the Connect Society's sign language classes, is vastly different from any other school in the city.

Based on the original Sudbury Valley school, which opened its doors in Framingham, Massachusetts in 1968, ISC believes that all people are curious and that the optimum schooling environment is one where students are given freedom to learn what they want, how they want and at their own pace. "What are you interested in learning today?" Rosborough asks rhetorically. "Everyone needs to be able to—and have the right to—pursue their own power, to

make decisions from the inside out and then handle the consequences."

WE WALK THROUGH

the school. There's a computer lab upstairs where a few kids are playing games. One is chatting online and a few more are in a back room playing videogames. They were the ones skateboarding before. Now they're playing a skateboarding videogame. Downstairs there's another half-dozen students hanging out on couches in one of the school's five parlour-style rooms.

ISC students govern themselves democratically and learn entirely according to their own initiative. The idea is that when students follow

ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS

their own impulses, they'll learn more deeply and effectively than a student who's told what to learn. Other than having to be at school 25 hours a week (12 hours for those aged four and five), there is no curriculum or tasks that have to be followed or completed. There are no exams or evaluations, except at the individual's request. Students are literally free to do as they choose, anything from computer games to skateboarding, painting, eating or reading.

"Sometimes, when you watch them, you wonder," says Rosborough. "They just sit and talk all day. About what? What are they learning about themselves?"

There's a student at the school, barely a teenager, who used to be into gangs, sex, drinking, drugs. His first day at ISC, recounts Rosborough, the student lied to him three times before understanding that it wasn't okay to lie. A few weeks back, that same student, standing in the doorway of one of the school's many lounge-style rooms, said to Rosborough, "Damn you! I tried to steal some of my dad's cigarettes last night and I couldn't do it."

Another student, 11-year-old Gregory Bengston, is researching business. He and his friend Nathan want to start a pay-per-play games shop. Greg used to be in Edmonton's public school system. "Not too great," he says about it. "The teachers were okay, but I didn't like the way it was done. Like all schools."

All schools?

"No. Well, all public schools."

We're talking in one of the lounges. Rosborough, Alexander Urlacher and Mike Kusiak are here too, the latter pair both 11. Someone's at the doorway.

"Hey, stranger!" says Rosborough.

"Hey!" says Nathan vandenBiggelaar, 14. "I decided to come."

"Good, you're finally here!" says Kusiak.

"Oh be quiet, peanut," says vandenBiggelaar. And there is laughter.

It's a good thing vandenBiggelaar has shown up. After all, he owns the school's only pop machine.

THERE ONLY ONE RULE at ISC. Okay, technically, three. They're known as the three Rs: be responsible, be reasonable and be respectful at all times. VandenBiggelaar pays rent to the school for his pop machine, like any business would, and is responsible for all aspects of its operation. He is pursuing his own unique interests.

"I wasn't interested in the learning, per se," Rosborough says about his days in the public school system. "I came out of it knowing I wanted to be a teacher, even though it wasn't a great experience. I love teaching. But I think the regular system keeps kids hostage, rather than setting them free." After spending 16 years teaching both junior high and high school with the Edmonton Public School Board, Rosborough took a couple of years off to travel and study. And then, after meeting Groeneveld, they opened ISC in September of 2002.

Recently, 17-year-old Amanda Garrison came into school on a Fri-

Photos by Brendan Procé

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day. She didn't have to be there that day. She came because she wanted to finish a project that she was working on. "They want to learn without being taught," says Rosborough. "If you've read *Siddhartha*, the message of that is that nothing can be taught. It has to come from inside. And that's why [ISC] works so well. Last year, we had six parents within five days crying tears of joy because their kids had changed already so much."

The school is governed by participatory democracy. Using parliamentary procedure, a campus meeting is run once a week. At the meeting, all aspects of the school's day-to-day operations are debated and voted on by all present students and teachers. Though students are not required to attend, it is encouraged, and their votes, regardless of age, have the same weight as a teacher's.

There is also a judicial committee, which is staffed on a rotating basis by four students and one teacher. The committee handles all matters of school-related discipline and comes to its decisions democratically. If any student ever has problems with a classmate or a teacher, they only need to document the case and the judicial committee will hear it, and, with the input of the defendant, will settle on a solution—and, if necessary, an appropriate punishment. The system encourages students to be responsible, reasonable and respectful because if they step out of line, they are judged by their peers. The nature of the school is such that any errant behaviour will quickly become public knowledge.

ROSBOROUGH IS TELLING another story about the student who couldn't steal his dad's cigarettes. "He was afraid to carry a computer monitor up the stairs for fear he would break it. I said, 'What happens when we face our fears and walk through them? We become more of who we really are.'" The same student, during an indoor rock-climbing field trip, got second thoughts halfway up the wall. Rosborough was his climbing partner. "I said, 'Feel your body. Instead of running away, like you do with alcohol, drugs and sex and all the other stuff, for once in your life just sit and breathe and feel the fear. Now breathe. A big breath. Feel what happens.'"

The student's eyes opened wide. "The emotion of fear and excitement are exactly the same, only one you're breathing and one you're not," Rosborough continues. "So I told him to breathe and he felt the difference.

And he went to the top and came down, and went up and went down, and went up and came down more than anyone else in the group. And when he got to the top, he felt the exhilaration of being successful, again and again."

The student, now captain of his hockey team, had an issue in a recent judiciary committee hearing—he felt the punishment handed down to him was unfair. "He didn't think it was right and he stood up for himself," says Rosborough. "No, I'm not doing that," he said. "It's not a good idea, it's not respectful of me." And we talked about it and he was right. He stood up for himself instead of just knuckling under, which is what he used to do. So he's learning more of who he really is. That's very, very valuable. And not very common in the regular school system."

I LIKE THE FREEDOM," Gregory Bengston says about ISC. "I like not having to be in one room all the time. I can go around and talk to people." The price of this freedom is currently \$5,763 per year, with discounts for registering more than one child and an additional discount for paying up front. Groeneveld and Rosborough reinvest nearly all the money that comes in; the school is funded entirely by student tuition. Groeneveld's monthly salary is small and Rosborough says he hasn't paid himself yet in the 14 months the school has been open. "There are several ways to run Sudbury schools," he says. "We chose to make ours for-profit. This is a business."

There are several governing philosophies at Sudbury schools as well. While some have lengthy doctrines by which they operate, the three Rs are used at the Edmonton location, one of 54 Sudbury schools around the world, according to Rosborough.

A recent article in the *Edmonton Journal* praised the Edmonton Public School Board for handing power from central office to schools themselves, putting the power in hands of teachers, parents and staff. Great for administrators and teachers making budgets, Rosborough says, but what does it do for students? "What we're doing [in public education] isn't working," he says. "It's pushing kids out the door in droves and making them very upset, unable, incapable, low-self-esteem, brutalizing, addicted, nasty people."

"We're saying, if we're going to have a revolution, let's have a *real* revolution. A revolution in education." ●

Indigo info

- ISC is open to all students aged four to 20, regardless of intelligence or past academic records, provided they abide by the school's three Rs rule: be responsible, reasonable and respectful at all times.
- All ISC students are registered as Alberta homeschoolers. In this stream, there are two options: traditional, where a student will work toward the same diplomas that they would earn in the public school system; or "unschooling," which is the category ISC falls under. Unschooling is child-led or natural learning, where the student submits an education plan to their

homeschooling centre, which is reviewed with a provincially-approved homeschooling facilitator at the end of their year.

- According to a 1991 survey of hundreds of graduates of the original Sudbury Valley school, 96 per cent of students who did their entire primary and secondary schooling at SV, 93 per cent of those who attended SV for three or more years including high school, 80 per cent who attended for two high school years and 83 per cent who attended for one high school year went on to post-secondary institutes (96 per cent of which were four-year colleges). —BRENDAN PROCÉ

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EDUCATION

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BY MURRAY SINCLAIR

As the film zigzags between low and high speeds, a man gets on the LRT, weaves through a small maze of passengers and finds a seat. There's a brief glimpse of the High Level Bridge and the North Saskatchewan River before the camera flashes back to sideways, helter-skelter train images. The man disembarks, ascends from the underground and enters a chemistry lab, followed by a succession of quick images of various pieces of equipment and the guy draining something into a sink. A statement appears on screen: "Today, my experiment worked."

Some Frankenstein flick set in modern-day Edmonton? Nope—it's the opening scene of *A Day at the U of A*, one of the winning entries in last year's "Sell Your School" filmmaking contest. Three University of Alberta students won \$5,000 for the film, equipped only "with video cameras, skill and imagination,"

says Pam Hnytka of sponsoring Access Television.

This year's contest will again allow Alberta students to showcase their creative talents and explain what makes their schools great—in less than two minutes. "More often than not," Hnytka says, "a lot of educators are telling the story, but there's a lot of intelligent students out there. This gives them a voice."

COMPETITIONS

A jury of television professionals will choose one winner based on clarity of message, creative and technical merit and overall impression. The viewers' choice prize will be chosen by people voting for the videos broadcast on the Access TV station and website between the April 1 submission deadline and June 23, 2004. The top five videos, as selected by popular vote, will compete shot-to-shot on an episode of *HELPtv* on June 23. A final viewer vote on that episode will determine which of the five finalists will walk away with \$5,000; the jury prize winner will be announced at the same time.

Last year, the U of A team beat out 31 rivals to nab the jury prize—Hnytka says their entry stood out because it was

nicely edited and narrated with the odd bit of text instead of a voice. It covered both the educational and social aspects of going to school, showing opportunities for student interaction in clubs and activities. Mike MacLean, one of the students who produced *A Day at the U of A*, said the video's technical, creative and organizational demands ultimately led him and co-filmmakers Erika Smith and Joseph Ferenbok to form JEM Productions.

Hnytka says school pride can sometimes run as deep as hockey rivalries. She decided to allow Grade 12 students to enter the contest this year, after many called her and said they have filmmaking skills as well. The competition allows students in telecommunications courses to hone their skills and those not taking these programs to explore filmmaking. In fact, Hnytka points out, entries from radio and television students placed well last year but did not win. "It's not necessarily about the technical skill," she says.

Higher-end digital film is the preferred format, but the competition will accept VHS entries as well. Hnytka advises would-be contestants to think of the project as a term paper, and says entries that tell a story tend to do particularly well. For rules, regulations and entry forms, go to www.accesslearning.com and click on "Contests." ■

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Bachelor of Applied International Business and Supply Chain Management

Link up to a future in supply chain management

BY GENE KOSOWAN

Changing market conditions have created more opportunities in supply chain management, a profession that is critical in delivering the goods in a more globalized economy.

"Supply chain management is an interesting career with a lot of marketability and employment opportunities," says Mark Arnison, Program Chair of the Bachelor of Applied International Business and Supply Chain Management program at Grant MacEwan College.

Roughly 95,000 jobs in Alberta are related to supply chain management, which focuses on the movement of goods and services within a global network of business partners, from raw materials to finished products. Fifteen per cent of Alberta workers in the profession occupy managerial positions in such disciplines as purchasing, traffic, transport and logistics, operations management, materials management, e-business applications and consulting.

The four-year program offered by Grant MacEwan College is geared towards students landing jobs in the management end of the business.

Besides the prospects of working in Alberta, many graduates have found rewarding jobs in the U.S., China, Japan and Europe. But regardless of where the work is, a tighter and more unpredictable economy has forced companies to integrate their strategies with suppliers and seek more efficient ways to shift resources between business partners. As a result, employers are looking for workers with enough savvy to meet these new conditions in the workplace.

"Because of the nature of the profession, there is more of a demand for people with a strategic focus and a big-picture perspective," says Arnison.

The bulk of the workforce in this area is also graying, making it more important

for companies to get new people in."

Students who enroll in the program get first-rate instruction in such areas as economics, marketing, accounting, computing and business law. They are also introduced to principles related to supply chain management such as Canadian and international business, inventory, physical distribution and logistics, operations, procurement and leading-edge information technology.

But where students really enjoy an edge in their education is in the directed field studies program, offered in the final year of study. The practicum allows students to become employed in a work environment for one year to apply their learning-first hand.

"Our students really find that valuable," says Arnison. "That's what separates us from other Bachelor's degree programs. In the fourth year students use the workplace as a learning lab. With the guidance of an academic advisor, they're able to work out the difference between theory and practice. This makes for a smoother transition into the job market."

Arnison also states that the level of education offered results in a highly translatable set of skills.

"People can move up or into disciplines like consulting, marketing and finance," he says. "There are several great jobs that are interesting to do in an area where the demand for workers is increasing."

Those interested in exploring career options offered by a bachelor's degree in Applied International Business and Supply Chain Management are invited to attend a free information seminar Dec. 1 at 5 p.m. in Room 5-152 of the Grant MacEwan College City Centre Campus (10700-104 Avenue).

For more information, visit the program's website at www.business.macewan.ca/scm or call (780) 497-5106.

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Big Rock reminds you not to drink and ski

Snow Valley

Photo courtesy of Snow Valley

Who need black diamond runs right away?

BY HART GOLBECK

Although most mountain resorts are still getting ready for their opening weekends, Edmonton's Snow Valley, located just off the Whitemud Freeway, has been oper-

ing for a couple of weeks already. Last Sunday and again on Monday (while still recovering from the Heritage Classic), I dropped by the hill. Like the temperature, crowds were moderate as boarders and skiers carved their way down the slopes blanketed by a solid 50-centimetre base.

Snow Valley is a unique urban ski hill because it has not only the usual rope tow and T-bar but a chairlift as well. For beginners, there's a "magic carpet" on the bunny hill—a fantastic

learning tool because of the way it lets beginners spend their time learning how to turn and stop rather than worrying about getting yanked out of their boots by the cruel rope tow. Farther up the slopes during my visit, the snow crew was busy setting up the basic necessities of a terrain park, including a jump, rail and tabletop. Helmets are mandatory in the park and the ski patrol suggests a high-quality, well-fitting brain bucket because a number of guys have been

knocking themselves silly attempting stunts slightly out of their reach. The rest of the slopes, however, are relatively gentle pitches great for practising your turns—and you can even let loose and lay down some high-speed carving action as well. (There are no black diamond or double black diamond runs here, though; those are the exclusive domain of the mountains.)

The best deal going at Snow Valley is in the evenings. From 7 to 9:30 p.m. on weeknights and starting at 5 p.m. on Fridays, lift tickets cost \$7. If you don't have your own gear, you can rent it for an additional \$7 for ski stuff, or \$14 if you're going to try boarding. It's not the Rockies, but for less than \$21 you can get in a lot of turns. Compare that to how much it costs to take in a movie nowadays; it's a great value alternative and a good workout as well.

SNOW VALLEY ALSO FEATURES a ski and snowboard shop, which is where Tim Borque runs the show. Not only is Borque an experienced ski and snowboard technician, but he also has all the high-tech toys to complement his skills. The sparks fly as he passes another board through the Wintersteiger base grinder, restoring it to pristine condition. He's a

good person to talk to about ski conditions as well, because when customers come in with delaminated or cracked bases, they usually bring stories of serious rocky experiences along with them. Because of all the school groups that show up throughout the week, Borque keeps a good selection of skis and boards on hand.

Although not open yet, another attraction at Snow Valley is the Sunday night tubing park. This is not an activity for someone with a bad back, but for the young, fit and hardy it's an exciting night out. The lift-assisted park will open on December 21 and for \$15 you get all the rides you can handle from 6:30 to 9 p.m. The tubes hook right up to the side of the chair for the ride up—and all you have to do is hang on tight for the ride down. For now they have just single-person tubes. I've seen group tubes in Warren Miller films, but those have yet to make an appearance here.

If you haven't been here for a couple of years, you'll also be impressed by the new lodge. A great place to kick back and relax by the fireplace is certainly a refreshing change from their old trailer-trash unit, whose walls were permanently permeated with the smell of wet wool, sweat and wax. ☀

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Bad ski movies—are there any other kind?—to get you geared up for the slopes

BY AMBER BOWERMAN

Ski season is peeking around the corner but it can't come fast enough for some. Luckily there's an abundance of cheesy flicks to satisfy would-be ski studs and bunnies as winter makes its final approach. Most include gratuitous nudity; all are chock-full of goofy plot devices and unbelievable stunts that could only happen when Hollywood hits the slopes. Here, in no particular order, are five nuggets to help you get fired up for another winter.

FILM

Ski School/Ski School 2 (1991/1995)

Canadians can be proud to have contributed the backdrop to the classic tale of hilltop hijinks. The *Ski School* franchise was filmed on location at B.C.'s Whistler Mountain, where the flick's philosophy—"We party here, we party big, we party now"—is alive and well. In the original *Ski School*, rival ski instructors Dave (good guy) and Reid (bad guy) compete for glory and girls but still find time to get sufficiently wasted and perform reckless stunts that make the chicks swoon. In the sequel, Dave's at it again, trying to outdo his study rival who's stolen the heart of bodacious babe Beth. Despite the "school" misnomer, these flicks have no educational value whatsoever—unless, perhaps, you want to learn to ski topless.

Downhill Racer (1969)

Robert Redford stars as David Chappellet, a cold, narcissistic skier who dreams of Olympic gold. His coach (Gene Hackman) tries to make a team player out of him by berating him with such wacky pearls of wisdom as "There is no C-H-A-P-P-E-L-L-E-T in TEAM!" *Downhill Racer* offers few plot twists—cocky athlete looking for win finds... wait for it... himself instead—but the innovative skier's-eye-view photography and burgeoning superstars make for a fun ride.

Hot Dog: The Movie (1984)

On his way to an international ski competition in California, Harkin Banks, a naive Idaho farm boy, hooks up with Sunny, a ditzy hitchhiker. It's all—pardon the pun—downhill from there. Harkin and Sunny hook up with veteran skier Dan O'Callahan and his pack of misfits. Their adversary, Rudi Garmisch, takes a particular dislike to poor Harkin and misadventure ensues. Fear not—even while battling the cocky Rudi, Harkin and his new buddy Dan find time to engage in casual sex with various ski bunnies in saunas, hot tubs and steamrooms. Heartwarming.

Aspen Extreme (1993)

Alberta's own Paul Gross stars as T.J. Burke, a handsome young thing who leaves his home in Detroit to—you guessed it—become a ski instructor in Aspen. While T.J. enjoys instant popularity and romance, his chum Dexter has a hard time fitting in. Can you say moral dilemma? T.J. is simultaneously pulled in three directions: he has to watch out for downhearted Dexter while a rich businesswoman and a beautiful blonde vie for his attention.

Ski Troop Attack (1959)

A heroic American ski patrol careens across the German border on a mission to blow up an important bridge during the Second World War. A stern old



fall
lines

BY HART GOLBECK

Can I give you a lift?

The first overhead T-bar was invented in 1936. The chairlift was invented the same year and was installed at the Sun Valley Resort in Idaho. Although it appeared on the scene at the same time, the much cheaper T-bar installations greatly outnumbered chairs. Back then, two-hour lift lines were the norm and skiers considered themselves lucky to find lineups shorter than 30 minutes. Hanging onto the bar was critical because if you fell off once or twice, your day was done. Lake Louise installed their first lift in 1954 and Marmot Basin followed by installing a rope tow in 1961. I remember lift lines in the early '80s lasting up to 45 minutes, but with invention of the high-speed quad, 10 minutes is considered a long wait today.

Extreme dreams

If you've ever contemplated producing an extreme skiing or boarding film, here's what you've been waiting for. Award-winning adventure filmmaker

Peter "Peru" Chrzanowski is hosting an extreme film course at Fernie Alpine Resort from December 8 to 14. It's an intensive week that'll cover all aspects of the industry from the early planning stages to marketing your product. The all-inclusive course costs \$2,300; all you need to bring is your ski/boarding gear, a digital video camera and a fit body ready to do some hiking as you tackle some of their adventurous terrain. For more information, go to www.explorex.net or call Fernie's public relations director Melody Kultgen at (250) 423-2442.

Fill your Cup

World Cup racing starts on Saturday, November 29 at Lake Louise. First out of the gate will be the men as they tackle the speedy downhill, followed by the Super-G on Sunday. The following weekend the women arrive to compete in two downhill races as well as the Super-G. For those of you who cannot make it, have no fear: Snow Zone's Colin Cathrea will be slopeside and should return with some interesting stories.

The Inn crowd

The Inn at Sunshine Village is offering a great early season ski deal. For \$130 you get two days of lifts as well as a night in one of their slopeside rooms. Staying up there this time of year is fantastic because temperatures are still mild, there are no crowds, it snows every night and you're guaranteed fresh tracks in the morning. ☺

technique more than we help it. I remember trying to teach some kids about changing edges, but after a lengthy description the glazed looks on their faces told me it wasn't working. So I grabbed a beachball from the daycare and rolled it down the hill. I told the kids to chase it and play soccer. The next thing they knew, they were changing edges back and forth again and again without even thinking about it. So find someone with a nice ass and follow them. It makes it that much more enjoyable. ☺



ski tips

BY COLIN CATHREA

Ski, rabbit, ski

I used to follow my coach wherever he went. It was a game called Jackrabbit—I have no idea why—and it went like this: follow the guy in front of you come hell or highwater. Skiing this way can be a little dangerous, but it adds a dimension to your training that you won't forget.

You can do this lesson on almost any hill, but stay off the extreme steeps, because falling on your buddy's head is not part of the plan. Pick adventurous routes that include jumps, terrain parks, trees and trails. This follow-the-leader game helps you develop some very interesting techniques—you'll notice, for instance that you might find yourself bravely entering terrain you would normally avoid. Now, obviously, your coach is not going to take a beginner over a 20-foot cliff (that is, unless he has some deviant ulterior motives). And you do need to trust your Jackrabbit buddy. If you do, you'll find that you become more agile as you keep your eyes trained on the guy in front of you, the terrain and the obstacles and hazards in your way.

Sometimes we tend to overthink things and wind up screwing up our



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Local

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Snow Valley - 60cm base, 0 cm of new snow, all lifts open

Alberta

Castle Mt. - Opening Nov 29, base 50cm, 30cm of new snow
C.O.P - Opening TBA, base 80cm
Fortress - Opening Dec 12, 75-100cm base
Lake Louise - 74-115cm base, 71cm of new snow, all lifts open
Marmot Basin - Opening Dec 4, 35cm base
Mt. Norquay - Opening Dec 12, snowmaking in full operation
Nakiska - Opening Dec 5, 45cm of new snow
Sunshine - 93cm base, 84cm of new snow, 65 runs open

B.C.

Apex - Opening Nov 27, 144cm base, 20cm of new snow
Big White - Opening Nov 22, 106cm base, 20cm of new snow
Crystal Mt - Open Sat & Sun, 86cm base, 1/3 lifts open
Fernie - Opening Nov 28, 81cm base, 71cm of new snow
Fairmont - Opening TBA
Kicking Horse - Opening Dec 12, 95cm base, 12 cm of new snow
Kimberley - Opening Dec 18, 64cm of new snow
Mt Washington - Opening Dec 6
Panorama - Opening Dec 12, 72cm of new snow, 68cm base
Powder King - Opening Dec 18
Powder Springs - Opening mid-December
Red Mountain - Opening Dec 13, 15cm of new snow, 73cm base
Silver Star - Opening Nov 22, 15cm of new snow, 99cm base
Sun Peaks - 13cm of new snow, 83cm base, 8/9 lifts open
Whistler Blackcomb - 18cm of new snow, 92cm base, 30/200 trails open
Whitewater - Opening Dec 6, 15cm of new snow, 90cm base

U.S.A.

Big Mt - Opening Nov 27, 15cm of new snow, 76cm base
Big Sky - 35cm base, 5 inches of new snow
49 Degrees - 26cm base, 22cm of new snow
Great Divide Ski Area - 76cm base, 20cm of new snow
Lookout Pass - 91cm base, 45cm of new snow
Mt Spokane - 60cm base, 27cm of new snow
Schweitzer Mt - 78cm base, 20cm of new snow
Silver Mt - 68cm base, 40cm of new snow, 5 lifts open
Sun Valley - 68cm base, 2cm of new snow, 5/20 lifts open

All conditions accurate as of Nov 26, 2003



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Locals hills offer spills and thrills

BY COLIN CATHREA

practically grew up at the **Edmonton Ski Club**. I remember the old jump—yes, there used to be a jump—that crossed over Conners Road. When the wind blew, you could feel it sway. They tore it down before anyone killed themselves (I think) and then landscaped the landing to a safer pitch. We also used to build killer jumps at the top of the old landing hill using hay bales. Ambulance drivers knew how to get to the hill quickly.

Obviously, I have a ton of fond memories of the ESC. My ski racing career began there and I can't count the number of broken skis I've tossed into the garbage behind the chalet. After school, I'd jump on the bus and head down to the lockers, where my equipment was stored. It took some time to warm up my rubber lace-up boots and clamp them into the bear-trap bindings on my old skis, but soon I'd be blasting down runs like Twin Birch, Luckies and Tunnel.

On busy days, when someone would crash going up the rope tow, it was just like a traffic jam on the Yellowhead. Some guys would just hang on and ski right over the poor suckers lying on the snow. There

were also a few broken legs at the annual "Slush Cup."

These days, the ESC is a great place for someone on a limited budget. Eleven bucks buys you a full day of skiing and an entire family can slide for \$300 a season. The T-bar is usually the only place you might find a lift-line, so staying on the ropes is a good idea. The ski school is quite good as well, and with the addition of a "magic carpet" to shuttle the rank beginner up the bunny hill it's a great place for first-timers. There are usually free beginner lessons on Sundays. The ESC is scheduled to open on Saturday, November 29.

LOCATED ON THE EAST END of town is the newest of the local hills, **Sunridge**. After a few minor name changes and some growing pains, it's developed into a decent place to ski and snowboard. They also have had

incredible success with their tube run. The only exclusive snow-tubing park in the Edmonton area is at Sunridge and it's expected to open by December 6. (It even has a dedicated tubing lift, so you don't have to walk up the hill.)

Sunridge, which is already open for skiing and boarding, also has a beginner hill, a budding terrain park and a chalet. It's located four blocks south of the Yellowhead Trail on 17 Street, just across the river from Rundle Park. ☀



Photo courtesy of Sunridge



Continued from page 20

sergeant, a rugged lieutenant and a lovely but lethal German lass guide you through this campy low-budget adventure that's harder to find in video stores than a ski movie without nudity.

Also worth a watch:

• **Avalanche Alley (2001)**: In this straight-to-video flick starring Ed Marinaro and Nick Mancuso, the owner of a struggling ski resort has to disarm seven bombs in two hours to save his lodge from destruction... and he has to look cool on a snowboard while doing it.

• **Better Off Dead (1985)**: After his girlfriend declares, "It'd be in my best interest if I dated somebody more popular" and hooks up with a handsome skier, Lane Myer (John Cusack) goes head-to-head with his adversary on the slopes. It does not get any better than this. ☀





By RICK OVERWATER

The Cup is half full

While most of us were enjoying the waning days of summer with our boards collecting dust in the basement, many of Canada's best snowboarders were already hard at work. A new training program was launched this past summer, allowing riders to polish their skills on the Farnham Glacier near British Columbia's Panorama Village. And already the program, which is run by the

by a whole second ahead of the pack. Anderson is currently ranked at number two by the Fédération Internationale de Ski. Of his three teammates—Jerome Sylvestre, Francis Boivin and Philippe Berube—only Sylvestre is in the top 35.

Meanwhile, Calgary's Almee Newton, the reigning Canadian alpine champion, has been making a dent in the World Cup circuit as well, working her way up to seventh place in Chile. Overall, Newton and her teammate Alexa Loo of Richmond, B.C. continue to produce middle-of-the-pack finishes. Newton and Loo are ranked

finals, landing in 12th place while teammates Dan Raymond, David Schettini and Drew Nielson took 14th, 15th and 16th respectively. Nielson's results are especially encouraging, considering that he's known as an alpine rider and this was his first-ever World Cup as a halfpipe rider.

With the exception of Anderson, who has another shot at Olympic gold despite a disappointing showing at the last Olympics, it may be a little prema-

ture to daydream about Olympic medals for Canada. But the Canadian team, with four halfpipe riders ranked in the World Cup top 20, is in a good position to build and Canadian coaches credit much of that to the new summer training facility at the Farnham Glacier. But when it comes to innovation, the rest of the world isn't sitting still either.

In October, the Canadian team competed in the world's first indoor World

Cup in Landgraaf, Netherlands. Similar to a hockey arena, the new facility is built on a hill and has a six-person chairlift. The snow is made with the regular snow guns you see at your local hills and the temperature is regulated to suit competitors' needs. "It was like you were in the fridge grabbing some milk, but it was a World Cup race," said Sylvestre, who posted his best qualifying time of the season. "It was pretty cool." ☀

Nielson's results are especially encouraging, considering that he's known as an alpine rider and this was his first-ever World Cup as a halfpipe rider

Calgary Olympic Development Association, seems to be having positive effects.

Alpine specialist Jasey Jay Anderson started this World Cup season in form, capturing a third-place finish in PGS at the first World Cup event in Valle Nevado, Chile back in September. In October, he went on to snag another third in Sölden, Austria and also boasted the fastest two-run qualification time, near-

24 and 32 in the world respectively.

Halfpipes hopes are still alive for Canada, with Whistler's Crispin Liscomb taking seventh at Chile's season opener, displaying his excellent bag of tricks that include 900s and 720s. Considering the staggering roster of international talent in the halfpipe category, Canada's other halfpipe hopefuls also fared well in Chile. Justin Lamoureux narrowly missed the

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The smell of sea-dwelling lifeforms fills the air, and the East Coast music in the background makes me feel as though I've been suddenly transported to the Rock. I'm searching for the words to describe the dining area, a compact section featuring artistic depictions of fish and unsurprisingly, lighthouses. Then it hits me: "rustic oceanic atmosphere." (Okay, so that's what it says on the menu. So sue me.) Speaking of menus, I'm loving the Lighthouse's lunch edition. The level of sophistication is greater than I'd anticipated, what with the red Peruvian trout and Cajun prawn pizza. And the dinner menu is even more in-depth, featuring a list of stuff that makes my mouth water—paella, Hawaiian big-eye tuna, bouillabaisse and California striped bass with a mandarin fennel glaze. Very nice. And the wine list seems reasonably priced, too—I see a bottle of Australian Rosemount shiraz-cabernet is \$23 and I know the same bottle will run you about \$14 or so in the liquor store, so Billingsgate obviously isn't going crazy with the markup. Being the soup junkie that I am, I start off with a small bowl of lobster bisque. The lovely orange mixture is described as having been prepared in the traditional French style, with cognac, cream and rich lobster broth. Topped with some finely chopped fresh parsley, it's incredibly flavourful. Rich yes, but it doesn't weigh me down at all, which is good because I have a pickerel fillet on the way. (Note: you can get a bigger portion of the bisque as a meal. Huge.) "That's a good choice," the server tells

me as I order the fish, prepared in a tangerine butter and served with green apple relish. The large, colourful plate features the northern Alberta pickerel, a side of rice and a medley of vegetables. Not just your cheap, run-of-the-mill veggies, either, but a mix of red pepper, snow peas, zucchini, cauliflower, broccoli, carrots and squash. The pickerel is good and tender, the white meat flaking apart as you gently prod it with the fork. I'm missing something, though. And unfortunately, it doesn't dawn on me until later that there was no green apple relish on the side. Damn. It would've tasted great with the pickerel... which is probably why it appears on the menu in the first place, right? Still, I douse the fish with some lemon and it's just fine. Average Price: \$\$\$ (Reviewed 09/25/03)

LEMONGRASS CAFÉ

10417-51 Ave • 413-0088

I was driving around aimlessly for a good hour, spotting nothing but "CLOSED" signs, before pulling up to the Lemongrass Café, a tasteful little Vietnamese place. Thankfully, it was open—the better half in the passenger seat gets awful grumpy when she's real hungry. We were seated in a deuce up against the camel-coloured walls and dove right into the menu. I considered choosing something from the interesting drink menu, be it a green tea-laced martini or a Nhaup vo sake Caesar but we didn't have the time. Need food—now. Kate and I figured we'd pick one main dish each, while I made the executive decision to start with some spicy kimchee and a special Southwestern Vietnamese noodle soup. Our capable waiter laid down the dishes—a plate of lemon chicken and a neat-looking vegetarian option, tofu with mango and apple in a spicy red curry. Oh, and some perfectly cooked fluffy rice. The crispy pieces of chicken were topped with a sweet, lemony glaze. Nothing fancy, but it sure hit the spot. And I really loved the vegetarian dish. The tofu still had some texture to it despite swimming in the lovely, rich curry. It included a few different types of apple chunks, though I didn't find much mango in it—just a little bite every now and then. I'm assuming the sweetness of the fruit was designed

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Quaint Bernard

Alberta's favourite chocolatier sweetens the Big Apple

BY NEIL PARMAR

NEW YORK CITY—Dressed in a white uniform randomly splattered with chocolate stains, Bernard Callebaut carefully prepares bite-sized treats at New York City's sprawling sixth annual chocolate show. He looks like a modern-day Willy Wonka, only less eccentric with his experimentation, as he drizzles white chocolate over rum-filled buttercream pralines and sprinkles coconut shavings onto soft chocolates with caramel centres. He later resumes his favourite activity: squeezing what looked like an icing bag until he slowly drowns a bright green pistachio in a pool of semisweet milk chocolate.

From November 13 to 16, Canada's most famous chocolatier melted, mixed and molded a luscious array of chocolate flavours for more than 25,000 people. "I try not to have one favourite chocolate because I would be automatically drawn to its flavour every time I tried to invent a new product," Callebaut says. His booth, named after his company, Chocolates by Bernard Callebaut, sits in Manhattan's Metropolitan Pavilion near the intersection of Flavors Drive and Bittersweet Chocolate Boulevard. It's as good a location as any, considering that once again he's the only Canadian present.

Last year, Callebaut was also the lone Canuck picked to prepare a plethora of pralines for more than 100,000 visitors at the Salon du Chocolate in Paris. So far he's the only Canadian who's been asked to attend next year's Chocolate Show in Tokyo. Still, the international chocolate community has taken its time warming up to Callebaut's confections. "People in Europe often see my chocolate and the Canadian flag nearby and they begin to laugh or question its quality," says Callebaut, adding that the "French often turn their nose up to me when I offer them some. But once the chocolate touches their tongue and it begins to dissolve, they warm up to the idea that North Americans can actually prepare gourmet foods."

CALLEBAUT HAS WON many accolades since opening his Calgary-based company in 1983. But his most notable accomplishment to date was receiving an invitation to the International Chocolate Festival in France in 1996, a nod from an organization that normally only deals with master chocolatiers from Europe. Callebaut won three major awards that year, then walked away with the festival's prestigious top prize in 1998 before being inducted into the coveted International Order of French Gastronomy by the French government.

Born and raised in Belgium, Calle-

baut comes from a long line of chocolatiers. "Chocolate is in my blood!" he laughs. For 69 years his family owned and operated the Callebaut Chocolate Factory. It was literally right next door to where Callebaut grew up, producing millions of pounds of chocolate until Suchard Toblerone bought the company after the death of Callebaut's father and uncle in 1980. Callebaut says the change in ownership gave him the opportunity to challenge himself by becoming the first artisan in his family to create individual handmade confections for the

FOOD

purpose of "educating North Americans about the luxury of chocolate."

After scouring much of Canada for a suitable location to set up shop, Callebaut eventually settled on Calgary because of its dry weather and



business-oriented government. He notes that his internationally flavoured chocolates are partly inspired by the Canadian concept of multiculturalism—his ginger is imported from Australia, hazelnuts from Turkey, almonds from California, walnuts from France and marzipan from Belgium. Alberta provides all the dairy products, from the freshest of whipping creams to the

sweetest of butters.

"I'm like a chef in a kitchen!" Callebaut says. "I love to create—and I love to eat my creations—but you need to make sure you have a fine balance of ingredients with everything that goes onto your plate. Or, in this case, your chocolate box." Ingredients for all of his chocolates come *au naturel* with no vegetable oils or artificial additives designed to extend shelf life. Instead, Callebaut ensures each of his "dealerships" (the company isn't a franchise) carefully maintains temperatures of 60 degrees Fahrenheit.

CALLEBAUT SHIPS his specialty chocolates to 30 separate shops throughout Canada, six in the United States and one in Tokyo. He recently attended the grand opening of a new store in Chicago. One of his newest and best-selling chocolate concoctions is a savoury blend of ginger and nutmeg-flavoured ganache surrounded by bittersweet chocolate and garnished with a spark of cinnamon. Both he and his creative team are currently working on reducing the sweetness of white chocolate by filling it with fruit in order to make the product more popular again. (His dark chocolate is more than 60 per cent cocoa, which lessens the sweetness and subsequent toothaches.)

But at least one man already appreciates Callebaut's white chocolate diskettes. Granted, he doesn't buy them for the taste. Sid Chidiac, an Australian painter with a display at this year's chocolate show, melted and dyed almost 100 pounds of Callebaut's W2 White Chocolate for vibrant portraits he created on chocolate canvases. "The viscosity and technical properties of the chocolate make it ideal for painting with," Chidiac says. "Also, if the picture doesn't turn out to be a masterpiece, you can take out your frustration by eating it." ●

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DISH WEEKLY

to counteract the fire of the curry and it all worked wonderfully together. (It was just fantastic spooned over the rice.) Our dessert, chocolate and pecan spring rolls, arrived atop a white, shell-shaped plate with three balls of licchee, a small dollop of whipped cream with a mint leaf and a tiny bowl of ginger coconut caramel glaze for dipping. This was a small masterpiece. I'd never seen a dessert like it and the taste was incredible—rich chocolate, melded with the pecans and paper-thin layers of the crispy spring roll, still hot. **Average Price:** \$ (Reviewed 08/28/03)

LEVA

11053-86 Ave • 433 LEVA

As soon as I walk into Leva, my eyes lock on the impressive-looking Sicilian cannolis behind the counter—I haven't seen old-school pastries like that in a long, long time. I instantly decide that after a relaxing, late afternoon bite, I'll be trying one. The main menu items are things like homemade thin-crust pizzas and tramezzini, which are grilled sandwiches. But I notice some unique items too, like the biscotti—lemon pistachio or anise-flavoured. Very cool. There's also a nice array of imported beers and Italian wines, like the Nipozzano Chianti, a fantastic choice I've enjoyed on a few occasions. I go with the chicken pesto tramezzini and ask for a side of green bean salad. Antonio, the guy who seems to run the joint, tells me they're out, so I go for the potato salad. He says I'll like it. The tramezzini is incredible and I'll tell you why: I've had the chicken and pesto

combo at other places and usually it's chicken loaf that comes with it. Not at Leva. Real, tender chicken breast, sliced thinly, combined with a tasty pesto and cheese. (I believe Antonio said it was Edam.) And the perfectly spherical scoop of potato salad is excellent—Antonio has left the skin on the potatoes, which I like, and he's mixed in a few artichokes too. He's also finished it off with a drizzle of olive oil and some grated cheese on top. **Average Price:** \$ (Reviewed 06/26/03)

PAT 'N MIKE'S FAMILY RESTAURANT

17732-102 Ave (Westgate Business Park)

• 484-7673

However long it's been since Pat 'n' Mike's got started, I figure not much has changed. And that's good. As I sit at the diner-style counter in my spacious, swiveling double seat, I gaze around the noisy room and find all sorts of cool stuff. There's a rack filled with those mini-boxes of cereal and nearby is a couple of pies awaiting their call to duty. I smile when I see the circular, revolving chit-holder that the open kitchen utilizes for new orders from the "veteran" waitstaff. And Mike himself is making the rounds, keeping an eye on things during the controlled chaos of the lunch rush. I decide on the cutlet sandwich with some fries and coleslaw on the side. Almost everything that I see coming out of the kitchen has gravy on it so I join in and get a scoop for the fries. Now, I'm not going to pretend that my sandwich is one of the best things I've ever ingested—it was zapped in the deep fryer just a little too long for my liking—but for \$5.75, I didn't really expect the world. I was eagerly anticipating the "special sauce" but can't help but crack another

smile when I find relish and mayo on my bun. The chunky slaw is pretty good, though. The two pies available for dessert are pineapple coconut cream and an apple crumble. I choose the latter, which costs me a mere toonie—half a buck more to have it à la mode. How sweet is that? The piece of apple crumble is huge, so I'm guessing Mike doesn't make all his profit from the pie counter. **Average Price:** \$ (Reviewed 06/26/03)

RICKY'S ALL DAY GRILL

10140-109 St • 421-7546

Ricky's—a western Canadian chain with a ton of outlets throughout B.C., Alberta and (I believe) Saskatchewan—serves a bevy of diner staples like liver and onions, Salisbury steak, burgers and sandwiches, but there are almost two full pages of brekkie food on the menu as well, and the cool thing is it's all available any time of the day. It's definitely a boon to the hungry diner, even if it throws a mighty big wrench into the selection process. Coffee cups are already on the tables (turned upside-down no less), and the seating consists mostly of booths. You half-expect Linda Lavin to walk up to take your order, but the Ricky's inner belly is new and clean, not beat-up and dingy like Mel's. It's like a new pair of glimmering white kicks—you need to scuff them up a bit...you know, work 'em in. They even offer shakes, so I order a chocolate one, the first time I've done so in a restaurant in years and years. The triple chorizo Benny was absolutely gigantic, with three eggs and a mountain of home fries piled onto an extra-large red plate (heated, good for keeping the breakfast contents warm). **Average Price:** \$ (Reviewed 05/29/03)

SCHÄNK'S ATHLETIC CLUB

9927-178 St • 444-2125

"The thing I love about Schänks," my friend Steve says, "is that other than the track, there's not a bigger cavalcade of problem gamblers anywhere." How prophetic. Just as we sit down in front of one of the many massive TV screens with the game on (they have the sound up for the NFL tilt as opposed to the CFL playoff game, which in a way is too bad), I can't help but notice the freakshow going on one table over. The guy in question is wearing a leather tricolored Miami Dolphins hat, his dirty jeans are wide open and his ample gut is hanging out, and in between nervously sipping coffee, holding on cigarettes and choosing plays on his QB1 machine, he appears to be rubbing himself down, head included, with a bottle of Absorbine Jr. But I'm more chuffed about the meager order of hot, boneless wings that we start out with. Nine bucks and there's nothing more than a handful of overdone, deep-fried chicken chunks with some hot sauce and a side of ranch. Luckily, one my superstars has already scored a touchdown so I'm in a good mood, just like the hardcore Canadian fans celebrating Saskatchewan's route of Winnipeg. The quality slightly improves with the next round of eats. I go with the peppercorn Jack burger, while Steve tries the spumbo submarine sandwich. I haven't had a burger in a while, so it's a treat to sink into the big patty, which was seasoned with—get this—"course" pepper and a Jack Daniels barbecue sauce. I wonder for a second if the typo was on purpose. Nah. My mixed greens on the side have about as much spring as the Blue Bombers offence, but the crispy order of



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kettle chips makes up for it. The home-made chips are nice and hot, served with a bowl of a real spicy onion, cream cheese dip. It's definitely the "play of the day" in this highlight package. **Average Price:** \$ (Reviewed 11/06/03)

TERRY VAUGHN'S SPORTS LOUNGE

10136-100 St (The MacLeod) • 428-3399

If you know anything about stalwart Eskimo wide receiver Terry Vaughn, then you know he's a class act who always looks good on the football field. It's no surprise, then, that the establishment that bears his name should have the same characteristics. The space is big (okay, that's where the similarity to TV ends) and bold, with stained wood chairs/accents, a beautiful long bar, comfy leather couches and a super-high ceiling left over from the bank that was housed in the space some 20 years ago. I'm starving when we walk through the door and in time, a healthy serving (in quantity, not cholesterol) of hickory smoked chicken dip is placed in front of us. The rich portion of dip—a tasty combo of jack cheese and tender chunks of chicken topped with melted cheddar—is pretty large. Served with fresh tricoloured corn chips and salsa, it's a great starter. I know it will fill us up but I can't stop dunking the chips until every last bit of the concoction is scraped from the sides of the bowl.

We split a house salad, a standard mix of greens and veggies, but the tangy mango vinaigrette we chose sets it apart from similar items on most menus. Even though the dip has bird in it, the slow-roasted jerk chicken with rice and beans jumps off the page at me. One problem: no beans in the rice. Oh well. The chicken is incredibly tender and man, the jerk coating hits me harder than Terry's teammate Singor Mobley in the open field. This was serious heat. I really like the dish, but for a few shaky moments, I feel like I'm in a sauna. Our server, a friendly lass from Nova Scotia, recommends the cheesecake for dessert and we like the sound of a strawberry and chocolate combo for topping. Really good stuff and nicely presented, with a few fresh mint leaves on the side. We're

filled up big time by this point and ready to get outta Dodge. The tab comes and I'm fairly impressed that we've only racked up a bill of about \$60, despite what seemed like a substantial amount of food and drink. **Average price:** \$\$\$ (Reviewed 08/14/03)

TOKYO EXPRESS

Various locations

Edmontonian Cathy Luke digs her sushi. The only problem is that her busy lifestyle made it difficult to make regular stops at all her favourite local haunts. What she (and people like her) needed was a quick answer to that craving—so she opened up Tokyo Express. How's that for problem-solving? The Hong Kong-born Luke, along with her sushi chef brothers Steve and William, debuted Tokyo Express five years ago at WEM and now the family owns seven River City locations, including the groundbreaking drive-thru down on 23rd Ave, a first in the Great White North. "I am a sushi lover," Luke says. "I thought that there should be a place where you can grab it quick, with good quality and reasonable prices." "That's how we started." Well, I've now run the gamut at Tokyo Express. In four days, I made three visits to two different locations, sampling a wide selection of what the homegrown chain had to offer. My stomach was rumbling by about noon so I went to one of their two mall locations to enjoy a massive rice bowl—the teriyaki chicken, to be exact. For \$4.95, you get a hearty dish loaded with rice, julienne carrots, cucumbers and a breaded piece of chicken, slathered in the teriyaki and topped with sesame seeds. On Saturday, we ordered the udon noodle soup, a single dynamite roll and rainbow rolls. Oh, and green tea. The udon was wicked, a generous helping of broth loaded with the thick four-sided noodles, crab, a breaded pork cutlet, sweet tofu, fish cake slices, green onion and a big, deep-fried shrimp. Monday, I tried the assorted sushi combo and took advantage of the add-on, \$1.99 for miso soup and green tea ice cream. So there you go – three trips in four days, at a total cost of about \$30. Try and scout out four decent, healthy meals for that much dough. **Average Price:** \$ (Reviewed 05/01/03)

TROPPIKA MALAYSIAN CUISINE

6004-104 St • 439-6699

As we meet up in the front entrance of Tropika and I'm amazed by how packed it is this jumping Friday night. I've been here before and I loved it—but that visit was quite some time ago. Years, in fact, and it seems Tropika's gotten a lot more popular since then. And why not? With the straw awning over the bar, the big woven chairs reserved for VIPs and the Hawaiian shirts on the waitstaff, it's like island party central in here. Before we even look at the tantalizing food menu, we giggle at the depth and variety of the drink list. Doctor Funk (and Doctor Funk's Sun, made with 151 rum), Bellini, Scorpion—they all look good. Birthday boy John finds his groove when he orders a Tropikolada, a drink that apparently comes from heaven. "You couldn't come up with anything that would make me happier," John says after slurping up the last bit of what one table member calls "an Orange Julius with alcohol." I figure food will make us even happier. Right out of the gate, we try some starters: a dozen satays (pork, beef, chicken and lamb), five Indonesian spring rolls and two bowls of Singapore Laska, a hearty soup with vermicelli noodles. The crunchy peanut sauce goes well with the satays and the spring rolls are incredibly neat, stuffed with pan-fried pork, Chinese mushrooms and shredded jicama, then deep-fried extra-crispy with peanuts on the outer shell. The Singapore Laska is a feast with shrimp, tofu and fish cakes all married together in a tasty broth. My favourite, however, is the Kari Lembu, a sensational dish of melt-in-your-mouth curry with beef. We also ordered something known as Nasi Goreng, a local recipe of Malay fried rice and a few delectable side dishes, including steamed spinach and Sambal Bunchies, firm green beans with prawns and Sambal sauce. While each of these creations rocks (very spicy stuff), the most memorable item is the Sayur Lemak hot pot, which comes to the table in a small kettle filled with vegetables and prawns simmered in a Malay coconut sauce. Oh, it was awesome, the broth so rich and colourful—by far the pièce de résistance. **Average Price:** \$\$ (Reviewed 10/09/03)

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restaurant & bar

Saturday Nov 29



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W/ AA SOUND SYSTEM AND LITTLE BABY CUPCAKES
BROADCAST LIVE ON CJSR

Tuesday Dec 2



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IN DEWEY'S (INSIDE THE POWERPLANT)
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TIX \$7 @ DOOR, NO MINORS, DOORS @ 8:30PM



For more info, call 492-2048 or visit www.su.ualberta.ca/events
The Powerplant is a service of Your Students' Union for UofA Students, staff,
alumni, and their guests. All shows are no minors unless otherwise indicated.

MUSIC • this week

thursday

The Standard presents yet another excellent house DJ tonight, San Francisco native and Miguel Migs cohort Jay-J, who's roaming the continent with the Defected in the House tour. For indie rock kids, though, the Sidetrack is the place to be, with Veal, Slow Fresh Oil and the Paperbacks providing some heavy-duty feedback. Doors at 9 p.m., cover is \$8.



friday

For the country side, there's prairie superstar George Fox at Festival Place in Sherwood Park. For the people interested in a crazy mixed bag, head over to New City for The Floor's CD release party in honour of their new disc, *Autonomy Off/On*. Calgary's Hot Little Rocket start the night, with electronic grooves supplied by live group Dietzche and the Abominable Snowman, and DJ David Stone.



saturday

Local legend **Robin Hunter** joins his band Six Foot Bullies at the U of A's Powerplant to unveil songs from their new country-fried album, *Your Heart My Sleeve*, while drum 'n' bass heads will be camped out at Stars for the long-awaited appearance of American DJ and producer AK1200, fresh off the latest installment of the Planet of the Drums tour.



sunday

A lot of punks will be sad by the end of tonight. Beloved Calgary group **Down-way** has announced that they are taking an "extended hiatus" (read: breaking up) and they'll make their final appearance in our city over at Stars. Nothing at All, Dilvit and the Brewkowskis will help send them off in grand, noisy style.



monday

Writing some songs, are you? Maybe plucking away on your acoustic guitar, thinking that you could be a star someday? There's no time like the present to get out there and make it happen, seeing as there's so many open stages around town. May we recommend checking out the Sidetrack Café's long-running social, hosted by local veteran **Ben Spencer**. At least see what the competition is like.



tuesday

That lovely and talented ex-librarian from Vancouver is back in town. Oh Susanna has a fresh solo disc on Nettwerk Records, and she's bringing her band to the Sidetrack Café, with Jim Bryson and Serena Ryder in tow. If you need some hard rock action, visit Stars on Whyte and see locals **Drive By Punch** play with visitors Crowned King.



wednesday

Get your Celtic on at the Sidetrack Café when Winnipeg kitchen partiers **The Duhks** drop in to spin a few Acadian jigs and reels for your dancing enjoyment. They're young, they're cute and they've got jaw-dropping skill with those fancy instruments of theirs, working the crowd with their "new wave old classic" sound. Darrek Anderson will start the night off.



newswire

AOL Time Warner has sold their **Warner Music** division for \$2.6 billion to an investment group headed by Seagram heir Edgar Bronfman Jr. and the investment firm Thomas H. Lee.... **Bif Naked** is the new host of the morning show on Vancouver radio station CFOX-FM.... **Corb Lund** will bring his band back to Edmonton during his annual Christmastime tour, hanging his cowboy hat at the Ukrainian Cultural Centre on December 19; the tour is being mounted in conjunction with the re-release of the band's first album, 1995's *Modern Pain*.... Canadian rap star **Choclair** is joining Snoop Dogg on his cross-Canada tour, hitting the joint at West Edmonton Mall on December 9.... '80s heartthrob **Corey Hart** has signed a deal with Warner Music Canada to handle releases on his Siena Records imprint, while ex-Headstones Trent Carr and Tim White have started the Music Division production studio.

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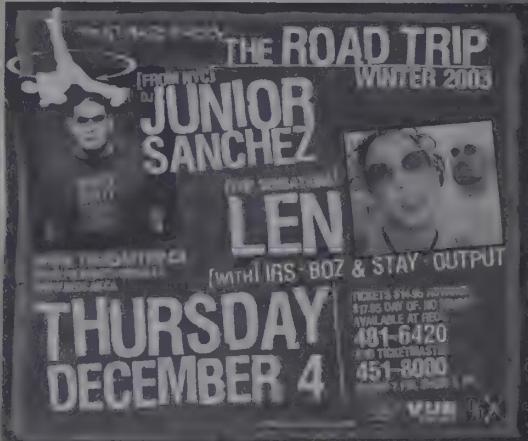
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MUSIC



music notes

BY PHIL DUPERRON
AND JERED STUFFCO

Alpha male soup

Black Market Inc. • CD release with *Knee Deep in Grass*, *Some Won Spit* and *PIND* • Stars • Sat, Nov 29 In most bands there always seems to be one go-getter whose desire to rock pushes the group forward while the rest sit back waiting to reap the benefits. But what happens when four alpha musicians get together in a single band?

Black Market Inc., that's what. Formed just eight months ago by guitarist Fat Dave Johnston (no relation to our own music editor, who is actually quite slim), singer Steve Gunn, bassist Shauna McDonald and drummer Little Dave Meagher, Black Market Inc. is taking the rock 'n' roll bull by the horns. "I got tired of screwing around with people who weren't as enthusiastic and passionate about it as I was," Johnston says. "I happened to know some people who were feeling the same about their bands and it was like, 'Fuck. Let's just start this super rock 'n' roll band with people who give a shit.' And our old bands wish they hadn't pissed us off.

"I think what sets musicians apart from people who want to play in a band," he continues, "is they don't really look at it as work. You love it, so you don't consider it to be a chore. Nobody will ever be reimbursed for the amount of time they put into playing in a band, the money and effort of

recording and promoting your show and stuff like that. If you love it you don't really think of it as something you need to get paid back for."

The co-owner of the record/label Ruckus on Whyte, Johnston decided to put his company's money where his mouth is by funding the band's debut disc. Recorded in July at Riverdale Analog Recorders by engineer/producer Jason Pratt, *Total Disregard for Public Safety Since the Beginning of the End of the World* is a shining example of what a little determination can accomplish. Fast, raw rock with power, skill and attitude to spare.

Johnston says bands like the Demons and the Hellacopters have been spreading the gospel of rock in Europe for years but Canada has been a bit slow to follow suit. Sure, Bionic and Shikasta are shaking things up in the east, but other than Les Tabernacles, Edmonton has been in need of hot rock injection for some time now. When bands like the Black Halos o-

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IT YA DON'T KNOW WHO... YOU SUCK!

Nashville Pussy pass through town the crowds are huge and vocal but where are they the rest of the time?

"Edmonton's so weird that way," says Johnson. "Every touring band knows it's a pretty good place to play—especially on the weekends. Bands from outta town can come here and play and everybody wants to go to a rock 'n' roll show. But it seems like in Edmonton nobody wants to play in a rock 'n' roll band." (PD)

Call in the family

Knee Deep In Grass • With Black Market Inc., Some Won Split and PIND • Stars • Sat, Nov 29 So what do you do when you've got a gig booked but you find out a week before the show that half the band actually won't be making it? Pull an Axl and cancel the whole show? Emulate Mark E. Smith and fire the band? No way—at least not if you're Knee Deep in Grass. Then, you just call up your family to help out. Luckily, KDIG ax-slinger Paul McGowan also plays in the McGowan Brothers Family Band, which includes his two brothers and their dad Jason Fedema. "The bassist and the singer won't be making it," explains Knee Deep drummer Chris Kerr, "so we're going to do half McGowan Family stuff and a couple of Knee Deep tunes as well."

Knee Deep in Grass has been rocking out for nearly nine years. But while it seems most local groups have a CD out even before they find their feet live, the Knee Deepers have taken a very different route, and are only now getting around to recording their debut disc, which is due out early in 2004. "We actually recorded it last August," McGowan says of the disc, which has the working title *5% Domestic*. "We recorded it, then we sat on it, listened to it and then decided to put two more tunes on it. Then we sat on it some more, added some more stuff again and now we're currently trying to bang out a deal with the Sidetrack

for a CD release."

Kerr is careful to say that even with a 16-month gap between the disc's recording and its release, the songs on *5% Domestic* are still current. "We're still playing most of the stuff," he says, "and the new songs don't stray too far from the Knee Deep formula. It's still pretty funky." (JS)

To Market, to Market

3rd Annual Prairie Music Market

• Sidetrack Café • Sat, Nov 29 • Singer-songwriters set (noon-2pm): Steve Loree, Wendy McNeill, John Spearin and Carolyn Fortowsky • Concert (9pm): Jen Kraatz, Ann Vriend and Cory Danyluk and Sarah Card For nearly a decade, Spirit River Distribution has been giving a leg up to flatland artists in hopes of getting their music to people across the country. Now, just in time for Christmas, they're taking over the Sidetrack for a day and turning it into a mini-music mall where happy shoppers can find gems for the real music lovers in their lives. You won't find Britney or Shania here, but the work of independent artists like Maria Dunn, Bill Bourne and Craig Korth as well as Stony Plain Recording artists like Ian Tyson and Corb Lund will be up for sale. Eagle-eyed shoppers may even spot some hidden treasures from the past like Jr. Gone Wild, Hot Cottage and Three Dead Trolls in a Baggie.

Singer-songwriters will entertain the early-comers and the bands will keep things going late. Local guitarist Steve Loree, who normally fronts Greyhound Tragedy, says he'll break away from his busy schedule in the studio to "warble on a stool." He's been known to play solo while spending time in Mexico and is looking forward to trying out a bunch of new songs on the crowd. While he's glad Spirit River sends local music far and wide, its true strength is making people aware of the talent right here in their own backyards.

"I think the most important thing about prairie music," he says, "is that people from the prairies should be aware of it so that they're not going to K-Mart to buy their music. Because that's the worst kind of music, the K-Mart music. They should be buying some of the local stuff, which is better, in my opinion, than 90 per cent of the crap that's out there on the radio today." (PD)

Card-carrying musician

Cory Danyluk and Sarah Card • Prairie Song Showcase • Sidetrack Café • Sat, Nov 29

"If we had to label ourselves, we'd probably have to call ourselves 'acoustic-folk rock,'" explains Sarah Card, the fiddle-playing half of the local duo Cory Danyluk and Sarah Card. But that's not to say that the label fits. "Whenever people ask me to describe our music," she continues, "I tell them that it's really difficult to do, and it would just be a lot easier if they went and listened to it. After they've listened to it, I've had people come back to me and say, 'You're right—it is hard to describe your music.'

"It's pretty eclectic," she continues, "but we're not jumping from reggae to rock 'n' roll or anything. There are so many different influences—there's country and blues.... It's all roots-based and it fits together quite nicely. At the same time, most of the stuff is pretty upbeat—Cory's got a lot of power in his voice."

Whatever you call their sound, it's reaching more and more ears these days. The band recently nabbed a spot on the *Acoustic Rainbow* compilation, which is sent out to more than 1,500 radio stations worldwide. Since then, Card says that the band has been garnering significant airplay in Europe with their track "Crossing My Mind." Their debut CD, *Jaybird*, came out this past May. Watch for the band to make a return appearance on the next in the *Acoustic Rainbow* series with the track "Take Your Own Advice." (JS)



Blackie and the Rodeo Kings • Sidetrack Café • Sat, Nov 22 • revUE How is it that three guys with guitars can manage a bigger crowd than most full bands? Well, perhaps part of the explanation is that we're not talking about just any old guys. Tom Wilson, Stephen Fearrion and Colin Linden are all impressive dudes in their own right, but when they don the matching star suits of the Rodeo Kings, they become unstoppable. If the Sidetrack dancefloor was packed, and judging from all the drunken people still in thermal underwear more than a few degrees below zero, the Heritage Classic game room must have been swarming. (PD)

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7pm (door); 8pm (show); \$67,

\$59, \$51 (reserved seating);

8pm; tickets available at the

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WINTER'S RESTAURANT

AND BAR Patsy Amico and

Brian Gregg (roots music); 9pm

YARDBIRD SUITE Mo Leferve's

Yardbird Suite (with Linda

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BAR-B The Acoustics (blues,

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BLUES ON WHYTE Little Mike

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Night (tribute show) PIANO

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FESTIVAL PLACE George Fox's

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Alenda (percussion); 9-12

BLUES ON WHYTE Shelley
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BLUES ON WHYTE Little Mike
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O'BRYNE'S Every Tue: Celtic
night with Shannon Johnson and friends; 9:30pm

FOAM PLANT MacEwan College big band
jazz; 7pm (door), 7:30pm
(show)

SHERLOCK HOLMES
(DOWNTOWN) Demick

Sigurdson

MON

LIVE MUSIC

BLUES ON WHYTE Little Mike
and the Tomatoes; no cover

GRINDER Every Mon: Open
stage/acoustic jam hosted by
the Bartman; 8pm

JOHN L. HAAR THEATRE jazz
band concert presented by
Grant MacEwan College; \$8;
tickets available by phone at
497-4436

LB'S PUB Every Mon: open
stage with Randy Martin; 9pm-
2am

LION'S HEAD Billy Wiseman

O'BRYNE'S Every Mon: The
Fabulous Suchy Sisters; 9:30pm

CLASSICAL

FOLKIE'S #1 FORUM

Edmonton Opera presents
Puccini's Turandot; 7:30pm;
tickets available at Edmonton
Opera box office, TicketMaster;
bring donation for the Food
Bank

STEAL A MILK

LIBRARY THEATRE An A
Capella Christmas: The
Discovery series featuring Con
Fuoco and the Edmonton

LION'S HEAD Billy Wiseman

O'BRYNE'S Every Wed: Chris
Wynters and friends; 9:30pm

CLASSICAL

MONDAY NIGHT

Tuffhouse: Reno and Mr. 'O'

ATLANTIC TRAP AND GILL

Every Wed: open mic hosted by
Dan Holden; 8:30pm

BLUES ON WHYTE Little Mike
and the Tomatoes; no cover

ENDLESS TAP HOUSE Magarigle

LION'S HEAD Billy Wiseman

O'BRYNE'S Every Wed: Chris
Wynters and friends; 9:30pm

WED

Youth Choir, 7pm; \$11

(adult)/\$8 (senior/student); \$20
(family); tickets available at
TIX on the Square

YOUTH CHOIR

Music for a festive

Season: Carol singing presented

by the Alberta Baroque

Ensemble; 7pm

DJ BEN SPENCER

8pm; no cover

DJS

BLACK DOG FREEHOUSE

Indie rock with Penny and the
jets

DUSTER'S Every Mon: DJ Dan

FLINTY McNASTY'S Metal

Mondays: with DJ S.W.A.G.

BLACK DOG FREEHOUSE

Digital Underrug

BUDDY'S NIGHTCLUB

Top 40; DJ Ben Spencer

CAJUNTE'S NIGHTCLUB

Bashment Tuesdays: hip
hop/R&B/reggae/dancehall

with Bomb Squad, DJ

Invincible, Q.B

DUSTER'S PUB DJ "Name a
Tune" Dan

FLINTY McNASTY'S Twisted

Trivia: with DJ White-Ford

URBAN LOUNGE Vedanta, \$5

CLASSICAL

BERNARD SNELL HALL

to your Health Concert Series

chamber music featuring Tanya

Prochada (cello), Patricia Tao

(piano), Martin Rudey; 8pm; free

GAS PUMP Every Tue: Karaoke

contest with DJ Gord

NEW CITY LEVINE LEGUME

Stupid Music for Stupid People

for Stupid Cheap: punk rock

bingo, rock

NEW CITY SUBURBS

Resurrection

industrial/EBM/electro/goth

with Nik Rofelya

RATTLESNAKE SALOON Every

Tue: DJ Butter, two-step lessons

with Leon

THE ROOST Hot Butt Contest:

with DJ Janey; 8-midnight, \$1

(member)/\$4 (non-member)

SEEDY'S Electro-trash, elec-

tro/punk/hard funk with DJ

Mannered

WED

LIVE MUSIC

X STARS Klein. Tamm.

Tuffhouse: Reno and Mr. 'O'

ATLANTIC TRAP AND GILL

Every Wed: open mic hosted by

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BLUES ON WHYTE Little Mike

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Karaoke contest with DJ Gord

RATTLESNAKE SALOON Every

Wed: DJ Butter

WED

DJ Butter

Wild Cherry: deep house/pro-

gressiv/breaks with Tripwatch

and guests

BLACK DOG FREEHOUSE

Glitter Gulch: country, roots

BUDDY'S NIGHTCLUB

Top 40 with DJ Stephan

URBAN LOUNGE Vedanta, \$5

CLASSICAL

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CLASSICAL

BERNARD SNELL HALL

to your Health Concert Series

Once upon a time in China

Edmonton Opera summons up Puccini with lavish *Turandot*

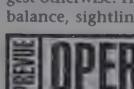
BY ALLISON KYDD

Despite its exotic, fairytale setting in ancient China and the spell created by exquisite music and brilliant soloists, *Turandot* still has relevance for contemporary audiences. It deals with such issues as trust and betrayal, the quintessential power struggle between the sexes, the difficulty of changing patterns of behaviour and, ultimately, the power of love.

The opera, the first production of Edmonton Opera's 40th season, was Puccini's last. It was completed by young Franco Alfano after the veteran composer's death and is often used to

explain the concept of *verismo* (i.e., realism) in relation to grand opera. *Turandot* was first produced in Milan in 1926 and is based on Carlo Gozzi's version of an ancient tale that exists in some form in almost every culture.

As director Brian Deedrick presides over another day of rehearsal, he wears a T-shirt proclaiming *IT'S ALL ABOUT ME*, but his actions suggest otherwise. He's concerned about balance, sightlines, set adjustments



and space, always conscious of the effect of the whole as he busily moves people about the stage until he gets everything right, occasionally calling a halt so he can give a pep talk or focus the action.

Watching the scenes and characters emerge, I want to know more

about them. First, of course, there's the enigmatic central character, Turandot, played by Canadian Frances Ginzer, who's recently returned to Calgary from Germany. She describes the opera as "very feminist, in a sense." That description is a stretch, unless you think "feminist" is a synonym for "man-hating." After all, the legendary daughter of the Emperor of China has been executing her suitors because they can't answer a riddle. (And you thought Kate from Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew* was a tough customer!)

GRANTED, TURANDOT HAS an excuse: one of her female ancestors was dishonoured at the hands of men and she has sworn revenge upon the entire sex. Still, she and the other principal female, the slave girl Liù (Sally Dibblee) are not immune to men. Not only do they find themselves entangled with the same man, but the most important decisions of their lives also revolve around him. Not a situation to be relished by the modern woman; however, these contemporary divas have found ways to relate to their characters.

"I love the role," Ginzer says. "I'm still discovering things about her." Hearing and seeing the "gen-



uine hochdramatisch soprano"—a label *Opera* magazine bestowed upon Ginzer—in action, one begins to understand the complexity of Turandot's character. The pride that is her birthright and her terror of the unknown are at war with womanly

pleasure and desire.

The character of Calaf, the Unknown Prince of the Tartars (sung by popular American tenor Michael Hayes), is also pivotal. Calaf is a man who wants more than just to possess a strong and desirable woman; he wants to know her. Liù, Calaf's long-lost father Timur (Marc Embree), the townspeople and even Turandot's father, Emperor Altoum (played majestically by Edmonton's Lary Benson), care about the fate of the charismatic unknown prince. And it doesn't hurt that Hayes' aria "Nessun dorma" would melt the coldest heart, even in rehearsal.

Dibblee's role is the most traditional one in the piece—a long-suffering woman ready to sacrifice herself for her beloved. Dibblee has no difficulty making the transition from dynamic modern woman to tragic victim; she's been practicing death scenes since she was a preteen. "That's the fun of acting," she says, "playing whatever you want to. Every actor dreams of dying on stage.... I'm a very emotional actor—feeling everything [the character] does, approaching from a raw emotional level. I can't imagine a time when opera singers didn't act."

Because Puccini died before the opera was completed, both Ginzer and Dibblee speculate about what alterations he might have made had he lived. Dibblee thinks it's significant he stopped where he did. "The death scene was as far as he could go," she says. Ginzer feels he might have further developed the final scene between Calaf and Turandot. These are provocative possibilities, but the work as it stands is magnificent.

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ON THE COVER



The fantastic Floor

Edmonton quartet stands on its own two feet with *Autonomy Off/On*

BY JERED STUFFCO

In theory, journalists are supposed to be objective. We're supposed to avoid getting too attached to our subjects, all the while dispassionately relaying information and providing insightful commentary for our readers. Well, that might work for the guys who write for *Time* and *Rolling Stone*, but the predicament of an independent music writer in a city the size of Edmonton creates another reality altogether.

Indeed, Edmonton's indie rock scene can be more incestuous than a family gathering in the Ozarks, and I've got the goods to prove it. Take local rockers the Floor as a prime example. I've been close to all of them for years: I've sat in Sunday school with the bassist, played in bands with the drummer and borrowed astronomy notes from the guitarist. To top it off, I currently share a bathroom and at least five major appliances with the singer. If you want objectivity, look elsewhere. If you want insight, stay tuned.

The last time I sat down with the tour Floormen to discuss official business, the world was on the verge of war. American airplanes had started to rain hell upon Baghdad and hundreds of thousands of armed men were preparing to march on Babylon, the biblical setting of Armageddon. Needless to say, love was not in the air.

Like stealth bombers unleashing their deadly payloads, the Floor were also about to drop some heavy shit in the *Doll* EP, whose commentary on the ills of life in a government town on the fringes of a continent made it a freight no less devastating (sonically, anyway). The bureaucracy of modern life really did seem like rubbish and as we sat in a downtown bar, the band pontificated on war, the increasing absurdity of pop culture and the menace of reality television.

This time around, however, the band seems more relaxed. Fresh from a photo shoot and on the eve

of a weekend appearance at Calgary's hallowed Night Gallery Cabaret, spirits are running high. Indeed, with a brand-new EP *Autonomy Off/On* about to hit the market (their second release in less than a year), a massive hometown CD release party and a new analog keyboard in transit from a recent purchase on eBay, the band's excitement is infectious. How is it possible that the same four guys could seem so different in the space of only a few months? Have they been consulting with Tony Robbins?

"I think it has a lot to do with the headspace that we're in right now as opposed to when we started," explains Matt Pahl, the band's singer/guitarist. "We were pissed off. I think why the *Doll* EP came across as angry, was being in the job I was in. Sometimes it felt like the world was caving in. This one is, kind of, um..."

Perhaps spotting my tape recorder, Pahl pulls back, but he's backed up by multi-instrumentalist Graham Lessard. "The stuff on *Doll* is seven of the first eight songs the band ever wrote," Lessard interjects. "Whereas now, the new stuff has been refined a lot more, and we've had a much more critical approach to writing the new stuff."

WHILE DOLL was all clenched fists and emaciated raps, the band's new EP sounds like a blast of cool air—esoteric and emotionally ambiguous. Compared to its predecessor, the new one is artier, better-produced and dare we say it, optimistic. Take a listen to "Isolene, I" and "Noncom" and you'll know exactly what I mean. If U2's *Achtung Baby* was the sound of four men chopping down *The Joshua Tree*, then *Autonomy Off/On* is the sound of four men gluing together the pieces of a shattered *Doll* into something totally new. "It's better, man," says drummer Dan Carlyle, helpfully summarizing everything for me. "It's the natural

evolution of the band."

More importantly, it sounds like singer Pahl has finally moved beyond merely paying homage to Ian McCullough and Mark E. Smith and dug deeper. In fact, if his performance on *Autonomy* is any indication, he's finally found his voice. "I've become a little bit better singer," he agrees. "I've got more confidence than I used to."

The band began making *Autonomy* last spring. However, with most of the album in the can and only vocals left on the studio's "to do" list, the Floor embarked on their first cross-country jaunt. The tour, which took them as far as Montreal and back again, had a pronounced effect on the band; not only did it solidify their musicianship and strengthen their resolve, but it

also pushed them to not simply follow up *Doll*, but to walk all over it. When they returned, the band scrapped everything and started from scratch. "If we would have put those recordings out," Lessard says, "it would have probably sounded a lot similar to *Doll*. The sounds were more aggressive but also more homogenous."

IN LESS THAN A YEAR, the band (which only officially formed last September) has released two EPs, completed a full-scale national tour, appeared on CBC's arts program *Zed* and packed venues in Calgary and Vancouver with like-minded bands Radio Berlin and Hot Little Rocket. Is there a plan here or are these guys just chronic overachievers? "We have a five-year plan," laughs Pahl. (Don't forget, this is a man who once fronted a band called the Politburo.)

"Putting the second EP out so soon was calculated," Lessard explains, "but it wasn't as much for momentum as it was to represent what we're doing now while it's still

current. When we did the CD release party for the *Doll* EP, we already had this EP practically written."

While things are definitely going well for the quartet, the lyrics on *Autonomy* seem to suggest that things aren't all warm and fuzzy in Floorland. Opener "Drown Inside of Me," for instance, has a haunting refrain ("An echo draws you to the water/Drown inside of me") that rocks just as hard anything off *Doll*, while "Blank Reaction" is raincoat rock through and through. "Cloud of Blinding Light" contains a classic bit of Pahl misanthropy: "I'll be on the side of town," he sings, "where there are no people."

Pahl tends to agree. "The [album] title has to do with the inevitability of certain things beyond your control," he says. "Sometimes, in order to get by, you have to succumb to certain forces that otherwise you'd want to destroy, but you cannot. It's just a theme; all the songs seem to revolve around it—it's all I've been able to write lately. It's just part of growing up. It's always been like that. I find it hard to be an individual."

Apparently being an individual in the Floor isn't as tough. While the various members all enjoy creative, um, autonomy, ego is often put on hold in favour of giving the songs what they need. "I actually think we're averse to outgrowing our roles," explains bassist Paul Amusch. "Everybody in this band is capable of so many things, but we chose to focus on one thing in the Floor."

"That's more or less for the performance side of things," Lessard adds. "As far as the writing, I don't think anybody here has been limited to their instruments in terms of the ideas for songs."

MAYBE THAT'S WHAT MAKES this band work so well; although they all contribute to the greater good of the music, each member has a very distinct personality. Lessard, the

band's thoughtful multi-instrumentalist and multi-tasker extraordinaire, has a vocabulary that would make even Noah Webster green with envy. Amusch, who also plays the piano like a devil and drums like a demon, seems to be a natural at everything he does, and is the only man I know who can work for four months out of the year and still afford to fly to Mexico on a whim. Carlyle, a hopeless romantic, is arguably the funniest man in Edmonton and uses more hair product than an Aveda-sponsored Poison reunion tour. Pahl, the band's oldest member and for all intents and purposes its leader, has a CD collection so amazing that it would be the envy of Edmonton's indie rock scene—if he'd only let anybody look at it.

Amusch describes a typical studio session as a way of illustrating each member's personality. "We'll lay down a good track, and Matt will be on like, 'That's awwwwesome!' and Graham will be like, 'You get an enthusiastic thumbs-up for that one!'"

Carlyle and Lessard then finish the scenario: "Paul goes [adopts guttural moan] 'Wha-a-a-a-a-argh.'"

And Carlyle? Where does he fit in? "I'm not even there, man," he says. "I'm probably in the bathroom."

Jokes aside, it's clear that the Floor have not only grown closer together since that dark, war-filled March night, but they've also experienced a lot of personal growth. "Personally," Lessard says, "I think that we could be really down that no labels have thrown a bunch of offers our way, but considering the amount of stuff we've done in the last year, we've got nothing to complain about." ●

THE FLOOR

Autonomy Off/On CD release party • With Hot Little Rocket, Dietzche V. and the Abominable Snowman and DJ David Stone • New City • Fri, Nov 28

Oh, the places you'll go!

Suzie Ungerleider—
a.k.a. Oh Susanna—is a credit to her community

BY DAVE JOHNSTON

Individualism does not mean isolation or self-sufficiency," author Robert D. Richardson once wrote. "This is not a paradox, for it is only the strong individual who can frankly concede the sometimes surprising extent of his own dependence."

Richardson was writing about American poet Ralph Waldo Emerson, but his words could just as easily be applied to singer/songwriter

Suzie Ungerleider. Under the guise of Oh Susanna, the Vancouver native retreated from her day job as a librarian and found her voice singing cathartic songs about longing and regret, becoming an independent recording artist and performer mostly out of necessity—she didn't really know anyone.

PREVIEW ROOTS

"For a long time, I was a very solitary person, doing my music," she says over the phone from Toronto, her adopted home for the last five years. "Part of it was that I didn't really know what I was doing and I was more comfortable being by myself. Early on, people would suggest that I

co-write with people, and that seemed weird. A lot of what I do is very cathartic and expressing this dark mood that I might be going through or that I see in other people, and to do that in some publishing office with someone seemed really wrong. Now I can be a bit crass with the whole thing because I'm not so sensitive, or maybe I'm a bit jaded now."

"When I first started, I felt that I needed to discover how to write music and how to sing [it], and a lot of it had to do with being by myself—and it still does. Now I feel a lot more like I have these compadres who help me out."

Those "compadres" happened to be folks like Fred Eaglesmith and Jim Bryson, not to mention Blue Rodeo's Bazil Donovan and Bob Egan, who

backed Ungerleider on her haunting indie album *Sleepy Little Sailor* and her new self-titled debut on Nettwerk Records.

MUCH OF THE NEW ALBUM

was written shortly before recording started, but Ungerleider credits her band's input for creating the uptempo feel that dominates the disc—a mood perhaps best expressed in the first single, "Right By Your Side." Of course, it all began with a simple suggestion. "One song, 'Mama,' was written as this 6/8 soul thing," Ungerleider says, "and then Bazil said, 'Why don't we try this in 4/4?' I said I'd try it his way"—and here she adopts a sarcastically impatient voice—"just to make him happy."

The result energized the band, but it didn't come without reservations from producer Colin Cripps. "He felt that the melancholy feeling in the lyrics would be lost," Ungerleider says before laughing out loud at the memory. "It was funny because Bazil said, 'I don't want to do another album of waltzes, okay?' Then I was, like, 'What's wrong with waltzes? Neko Case has albums full of waltzes!'"

HYPESTER



Ungerleider continues to laugh "That's the thing—we were much more familiar with each other, than you can say things like that to each other and not feel like you're stepping out of line. The record is totally about the personalities of the people involved—at least, for me."

Perhaps finally finding a place amongst others has brought the real Ungerleider to the surface. "Or maybe it's a new me altogether," she responds. "Maybe I've become a different person, and that's wonderful." •

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MONDAY DECEMBER 08 2003



root down

BY JENNY FENIAK

Ayre's on the side of caution

The Dustkickers • Black Dog • Sat, Nov 29 (afternoon show) The Dustkickers owe their existence to the match-making skills of a mutual friend out in Toronto, who hooked up David Ayre and Mike Berezowsky as country companions about three years ago. "I showed up and Dave was wearing a Slayer T-shirt," Berezowsky says. "We played Merle Haggard and looked at one another and smiled and knew it was, like, the right thing."

Ayre used to play thrash metal back in the day, but now he stands onstage grinning like a child, his short, clean-cut hair slicked flat to one side. He still wields a guitar, only now it's acoustic and he strums it in a much more relaxed way, proof that he's finally tapped into his long-lost prairie roots. "I took a long break from music, probably about six years," Ayre says, whereupon Berezowsky pipes in with a fuller explanation. "He went to Australia for a year. He spent about half the time there working

on a ranch and the other half living out of his car, reading Steinbeck by candlelight at night and surfing all day."

But Ayre's focus was relearning music and it was the old sounds he'd heard listening to CFCW with his grandfather that he wanted to master. "Buck Owens would intentionally make all his songs sound really twangy and nasally and trebly because that's what would go on AM radio," Ayre explains. "It would transmit a lot better than bass sounds, so people would hear that a lot better and pick it up. Little tricks like that."

Ayre has the voice of a good ol' country boy, and his skills are complemented by the Dustkickers' two other singer-songwriters, Berezowsky and John Ryane. Even though the group pulls off some nice harmonies, each member has a very distinctive voice. Berezowsky's yowl is a little slower than Ayre's fun and fancy-free approach, with a hint of folk stalwart Roy Forbes. And then there's Ryane, who kicks up some western swing with a strong yet romantic timbre.

Ryan and pedal steel player Gary Okrainec are the older, wiser ones in the group. They've given the band's young 'uns (rounded out by drummer Dennis Boisvert) some insight into the other world of country music, where places like the Transit and the Drake expect bands to have mastered a full repertoire of cover tunes. But with some younger blood around, Ryane and Okrainec have had their eyes opened to the younger generation of country music fans who are more than happy to hear a few originals thrown into the mix.

"I just remember, like, for the first probably half a year, Dave and I'd be doing rehearsals and Gary would go into a solo and Dave and I would just start laughing out loud," Berezowsky recalls.

"I started laughing," Ayre explains, "'cause I was so happy that this dude could play so rad on the steel guitar."

Life of Bryson

Jim Bryson • With Oh Susanna • Sidetrack Café • Tue, Dec 2 Christmas may still be a few weeks off, but Jim Bryson is coming to town with all the 'bah humbug' he can muster. Thankfully, though, his down-and-out attitude doesn't detract from his musical talent.

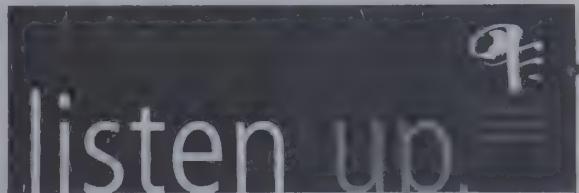
With two releases to his name, Bryson has been touring everywhere—across Canada, across the ocean and back. Small wonder he has trouble seeing the four days he'll be spending at home before he leaves for his western Canadian tour with Oh Susanna as a welcome break. "I'm just between trips," he insists. Other working musicians should be so lucky! David Franey bought a new house and spent just one day moving in with his family before hitting the road for five months.

Bryson says he didn't get to see much during his time overseas—he spent one night off in France eating takeout and watching television in his room. But Bryson loves playing in Europe, and especially appreciates audiences' reverential attitude toward musicians, the complete attention the devotee to his performances and their willingness to

invest in his recordings. His two albums (including *The Northside Benches*, which was released last September), have both been well-received, but Bryson refuses to look on the bright side. "[*The Northside Benches*] is number 15 on the *Exclaim!* chart," he says, "but that will probably change—it will probably go down."

Many of Bryson's tunes contain airy, emotional hooks reminiscent of Kathleen Edwards (he even played guitar on two of

Edwards's albums), but if you listen closely, you'll discover some pretty depressing and hopeless lyrics lurking underneath the pretty melodies. A poopy-pants personality like Bryson might not seem like much fun to be around, but the beauty of his music is what really matters. "That whole self-deprecating thing?" his label, Orange Records, says. "It's genuine. But it hasn't prevented Bryson from producing jaw-dropping original songs."



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BY DAVID STONE

Jay to the world

After all the pontificating I did in last week's column over the **Erick Morillo** gig at the Standard last Thursday, can you believe I didn't even make it down? A pressing deadline tied me up, but plenty of you still managed to get over to the southside club to hear the American house DJ rip the place apart with a steady stream of jacking' beats. What a few people told me the next day was Morillo played a far more pro-

gressive set than anyone expected, perhaps a sign that Yankee house is headed in a new direction. I would have preferred to have been there instead of staring at a computer screen, wondering what to do next.

Another DJ who's looking to reinterpret our definition of house is **Jay-J**, who's bringing his Defected in the House tour to the Standard tonight (Thursday). The San Francisco native is best known for DJ sets that layer R&B, jazz and reggae with chugging, four-on-the-floor organic rhythms. It's surprising that not many people



Jay-J

know he's been an accomplished producer since 1994, starting up Moulton Studio Recordings in 1997 and more recently the MultiTracked label. Moulton is widely acknowledged as the hub of the current flavour of West Coast house thanks to Jay-J's tight partnerships with producers like Chris Lum, Marques Wyatt and Julius Papp, as well as labels like Distance Music and Miguel Migs's Naked Music.

The superior quality of Moulton's output, combined with his smooth mixing skills, has put Jay-J in the sights of the global clubbing industry particularly Defected Music in the U.K. The label invited Jay-J and Migs to collaborate on a double-disc CD compilation entitled *In the House*, which has successfully exported their energetic, soulful sounds to a receptive worldwide audience.

It's also been a while since we've last heard from the local broken beat collective Subterranean Sound. Since their last show with Aphrodite at the end of the summer, the group has kept their profile low, playing small gigs and trying to break a few original ideas open in the studio. However, they've managed to get their energies behind the **AK1200** show at Stars this Saturday. The American DJ is hot off another touring season with the annual Planet of the Drums road show, which also featured fellow selectahs Dieselboy and Dara, but this solo outing means drum 'n' bass heads will get a heavy dose of the dark style the Orlando, Florida native has been rocking, recently spotlighted on the recent compilation *At Close Range*.

AK1200 (a.k.a. Dave Minner) is definitely a pioneer of the American drum 'n' bass sound; he latched onto the breakbeat groove in the early '90s and pushed into harder and faster territory with each passing year. Last year's release of his first artist album, *Shoottokill*, wasn't an ear-bleeding assault of rushing hi-hats and busting low-end, however, but a balance of dancefloor delights and chilled atmospherics. As well, his remixes for the likes of the Crystal Method and A Tribe Called Quest have broadened his appeal to a more commercial audience without selling him out. He's not a bad DJ, either. ●

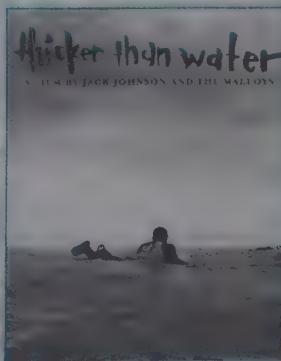
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NEW SOUNDS

BLINK 182
BLINK 182
(GEFFEN)



WHEAT
PER SECOND, PER SECOND,
PER SECOND... EVERY SECOND
(SONY)

At some point over the last couple of years, the members of Blink-182 must have looked at one of their songs and asked themselves, "What's my age again?" Maybe it was more candles on the birthday cake. Maybe it was having kids. Maybe it was the side projects (Boxcar Racer, Transplants). But on this, their sixth album, the So-Cal jokers appear to have left their puerile antics behind and grown up, emerging from their poo-encrusted chrysalis with 14 songs of remarkable maturity and sparkling originality.

None are the snotty, pull-my-finger anthems, replaced by engaging, well-crafted, personal lyrics and innovative production. The spitting attitude is still there, but songs like "Stockholm Syndrome" and "Violence" are blatant attempts at broadening their creative horizons, dropping some post-punk artiness and sophistication into their pop-punk formula, while "All of This" (a collaboration with the Cure's Robert Smith) and "Obvious" find the group unashamedly reveling in their childhood influences. Growing older doesn't mean getting boring; they've realized. Adulthood really does suit them well. ★★★★ —DAVE JOHNSTON

SMALL BROWN BIKE
THE RIVER BED
(SMALLMAN)

When Small Brown Bike's last EP, *Nail Yourself to the Wall*, came out, I was excited. It sounded like they were getting ready to put out another strong full-length after some line-up changes. They did. Then they broke up.

While the band is apparently dead, their new album, *The River Bed*, still walks the earth, ready to haunt us with the passionate post-hardcore that marked the Michigan band's life. There was a certain *je ne sais quoi* that allowed SBB to avoid caricature without softening the feelings they poured into their songs. This is why it feels wrong to use the dreaded terms "emo" or "hardcore" to describe them.

The River Bed demonstrates this quality from the very first song, "Deconstruct/Rebuild," on which driving guitars combine with singer Mike Reed's intense vocals to create a mood of triumph despite the dour lyrics. The band only starts to lose it on the pair of weepy, mushy ballads that close the album and which almost sound like the work of a different band.

SBB's demise came too early, and this album can only hint at what they might have done had they found a way to cheat death. ★★★★ —JAMES ELDRED



FUN LOVIN' CRIMINALS
WELCOME TO POPPY'S
(SANCTUARY/BMG)

It's not fair to hold a new FLC album to the same standards of bands like Radiohead or Queens of the Stone Age. After all, ever since the smash-hit success of "Scooby Snacks" back in the '90s, the Criminals have inundated the world with fusion songs that aren't meant to be anything more than background music at weekend keggers.

In a month or so, we can judge whether or not *Welcome to Poppy's* has been a success if: (a) we regularly it blaring from Whyte Ave car stereos at about two in the morning; (b) it's playing in the background the next time we attend a party where the main attraction is a frosted-hair jock smashing beer cans against his forehead; or (c) when a track from the album is selected on the Garneau Pub jukebox and you can admit to your friends that even though you can't remember the song's name it's kind of a guilty pleasure.

It all boils down to this: will fratboys drink and dance to *Welcome to Poppy's* or not? Through the first five tracks, the answer is unclear. On "Too Hot" and "Living on the Streets," FLC explores some '70s disco, soul and funk hues that they've never tried out before. But when the hip-hop beats and the cries of "doobie, doobie-DOO!" in the sure-to-be-hit-single "You Got a Problem" kick in, the band shows that while they may be one-trick ponies, they still excel at that one trick. ★★ —STEVEN SANDOR

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CHAPTERS LIVE

Oh Susanna



Every artist rides the switchbacks of direct comparison before they earn the right to step into their own musical shoes and leave a customized footprint. At first, Canadian singer-songwriter Oh Susanna might have been Dylanesque with her stark intense narratives. As she developed, she was sometimes called (Gillian) Welchesque for her mountain-air monologues. With the arrival of a third, full-length, self-titled album, the time for the lazy likening of Suzie Ungerleider to anyone else has passed. With its depth of accomplishment to delight everybody that hears it, the only description from this record on can be Oh Susanna-esque.

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Canadian Beauty

Falling Angels
shows Canadian
suburbs can be just
as dysfunctional as
American ones

BY CHRIS WANGLER

We North Americans love our suburban dysfunction, don't we? By some mysterious logic of postmodern voyeurism, we take great pleasure in Todd Solondz's twisted characters, such as the pedophile from *Happiness*, or the increasingly farcical conflicts depicted

in *American Beauty* and *The Ice Storm*.

But do these films reflect the realities of life in the St. Alberts and Sherwood Parks of the world? Do they show, for instance, that family dysfunction is often quite functional, with each member playing a role,



etly grapples with some heady themes, making it one of the more memorable Canadian pictures of the year.

Don Mills, Ontario, 1969. The only thing Jim Field (Callum Keith Rennie) and his wife Mary (Miranda Richardson) seem to have in common is alcoholism. Back in their salad days, when the domineering Jim liked to force the family to retreat to his backyard bomb shelter for nuclear holocaust drills, the couple still had the energy to fight. Ten years later, as their three daughters reach adolescence, the tension has become a domestic Cold War, with the family's chilly yellow suburban living room serving as ground zero. While Jim boasts emptily about the family's former glories, partly to disguise his current extramarital infidelities, Mary lies on the couch all day, semi-catatonic, sipping rye from a porcelain coffee cup.

The girls cope in different ways. Lou (Katherine Isabelle), the sarcastic middle child and the film's most sympathetic character, never misses an opportunity to spite her tyrant father, smoking in the house and tuning out with Tom (Kett Turton), her new hippie boyfriend, in his VW van. Lou's sisters, the fat yet sensitive Norma (Monté Gagné) and the clueless Sandy (Kristin Adams), show some sympathy for their overzealous father, but begin to break free after some unusual

sexual awakenings. All three, however, must keep an eye on their increasingly unpredictable mother, who becomes like a family pet that wants to escape. When Mary begins to teeter on the edge (quite literally), the Fields are forced to confront a dark secret that is at the root of all the turmoil.

SHOT IN SASKATCHEWAN, *Falling Angels* lovingly recreates Canadian suburbia in the late 1960s. It's a sunny, cold and oddly apolitical place, echoing with forgotten pop songs and old CBC reruns. In his second feature, director Scott Smith shows a careful eye for the symbolic significance of postwar domestic spaces such as basements and barren subdivision streets. His largely Canadian cast is excellent throughout, especially rising star Katherine Isabelle (*Insomnia*, *Ginger Snaps*), who plays the feisty Lou with deadpan brilliance. As an added bonus, Mark McKinney, the *Kids in the Hall* and *SNL* alumnus, appears in a funny if slightly unsettling role.

The most fascinating—and disappointing—character is the melancholic Mary, who is the centre of the home and the action. Like Julianne Moore's character in *The Hours*, Mary suffers from some paralyzing form of postpartum depression. But like so many similar postwar wives, her grief goes largely unexpressed. In such a

challenging role, two-time Oscar nominee Miranda Richardson conveys a great deal through empty glances and lethargic inactivity. Unfortunately, an otherwise excellent script by poet and editor Esta Spalding doesn't give her quite enough dialogue to work with, causing some of the story developments, particularly the climax, to seem overly spontaneous. The ending, in which the girls travel to Niagara Falls with their bereft dad, departs quite freely from Gowdy's novel and is equally unsatisfying, partly because it is a bit forced.

Perhaps these shortcomings say more about the difficulties of adapting a talented writer's work than the passion the filmmakers brought to this labour of love. This isn't the first time Gowdy's work has been made into a movie, nor will it be the last (in 1996, Lynne Stokpewich turned one of her stories into *Kissed*, an odd but touching story of a female necrophiliac). In spite of its concessions, *Falling Angels* is faithful to Gowdy's characters and dark humour, providing a highly realistic and undeniably Canadian portrait of a postwar family. ♦

FALLING ANGELS

Directed by Scott Smith • Written by Esta Spalding • Starring Miranda Richardson, Callum Keith Rennie and Katherine Isabelle • Opens Fri, Nov 28

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How it all fell together

Falling Angels, the second feature from 33-year-old director Scott Smith, is a notable departure from his self-produced and directed debut *Rollercoaster* (2000), a dark teen drama set in a PNE-style amusement park. When I talked to him over the phone from Vancouver, Smith told me about the prairies, the Canadian Cold War and the challenges of adapting fiction into film.

Vue Weekly: Any Edmonton connections in *Falling Angels*?

Scott Smith: Edmonton's my home town! I was born there. Callum Keith Rennie (Jim Field) is from Edmonton too. It's funny. Of the handful of B.C. filmmakers who work out in Vancouver, especially the ones I went to film school with, a lot of them are actually from the prairies.

VW: Speaking of the prairies, whose decision was it to shoot in Saskatchewan? The book is actually set in Don Mills, Ontario.

SS: During the writing, I was thinking about where we could find a 1950s neighbourhood that looked like it could be in the '60s. To me, the biggest key was small or no trees. But even if you can find that kind of neighbourhood in Vancouver or Toronto, most have 50-year-old trees. In the end, we chose Regina. But as we flew into the city, I noticed that where the prairie met the city, the trees started. I thought to myself, "God, there's a lot of trees here." After we landed, the taxi driver told us that about 300,000 elm trees were planted in the city in the '40s! We spent an entire day looking for a neighbourhood without elm trees and couldn't find one. One of the Saskatchewan producers suggested we check out Moose Jaw and everything went from there.

VW: The exteriors have the feel of the prairies. Was that intended?

SS: It's interesting. When we started shooting in Moose Jaw, we noticed that the light was so fantastic. A lot of people from the prairies have noticed this when they see the film. But people who grew up in Toronto or Vancouver during the '60s also swear that it's what their neighbourhoods looked like there too. Maybe it's because we worked from the producer's and Barbara Gowdy's photos of Don Mills and my parents' photographs from Edmonton.

VW: So what exactly makes this film so specifically Canadian?

SS: With respect to the Cold War, our perspective as Canadians is very different than the U.S. and even lags behind the U.S. The '60s in Canada were really about the death of the '50s. After the horrors of the Second World War, there was a complicity—an agreement not to mention the war. This informed family life and is partly what Barbara's book is about.

VW: How much of Barbara Gowdy's novel did you and screenwriter Esta Spalding keep in and how much did you leave out?

SS: I'm not even sure anymore. Esta and I agreed that the biggest mistake we could make would be to transfer the apparent structure of the novel directly into the film. We wanted to reduce the novel down to its essential elements. You could make probably make 10 movies out of *Falling Angels*, but we selected the most important parts and then wrote a screenplay with them. The events of the film are based largely on the last few chapters of the book when the girls are teenagers. We started near the climax, when the girls become sexual beings. —CHRIS WANGLER

The Elephant of surprise

Gus van Sant's Cannes prizewinner offers no explanations for Columbine

BY JOSEF BRAUN

Somewhere between last spring, when I first heard about Gus van Sant's *Elephant* (after it won both Palme d'Or and Best Director awards at Cannes) and the other week, when I finally saw it, I'd managed to forget what the fuss was all about. This is kind of forgetfulness I find very rewarding: I'm able to walk into a cinema, get comfortable and be genuinely surprised by what appears onscreen a difficult task these days given the ubiquity of the movie hype machine.

Elephant begins quietly with credits appearing over time-lapse shots of clouds (reminiscent of earlier van Sant films like *My Own Private Idaho*), some lower lines and voices of teens, a combination innocuous enough to set foreboding. The next image is of a long, bird's-eye shot of a car swerving down a suburban street, narrowly missing a cyclist and running stop signs before pulling over. At this point we see inside the car, where a son is asking his drunken father to trade

places with him so that they can finish the remainder of the drive to school in one piece. The scene's both funny and very sad and, though it bears no direct relationship to the rest of the film, it somehow perfectly sets the tone for everything that follows.

Soon we're inside Watt High School in van Sant's home of Portland, Oregon (the fact that van Sant found a school named after a Samuel Beckett novel seems telling). Harris Savides's camera flows down the hallways, trailing behind students' heads

REVUE DRAMA

(all of the actors are real high school students), evoking both a documentary feel and the creepy Steadicam shots from *The Shining*. Once the camera ventured outside to watch some kids practice football while Beethoven's Moonlight Sonata played on the soundtrack, it finally hit me: oh yeah, this is the Columbine movie. And by the time *Elephant* was half over, some part of me was begging for the shooting to begin because the sick feeling of dread in my stomach had become nearly unbearable.

AS UNLIKELY AS the scenario may be (and reading this review won't help), not knowing what *Elephant* is about

puts you at a great advantage—the baggage strapped to this film is hefty enough even if you come to it with no expectations. Many have lashed out against van Sant's response to the tragic teen shooting because of its supposed irresponsibility: as opposed to Michael Moore's Oscar-winning *Bowling for Columbine*, *Elephant* offers no solid explanations, no answers to what went wrong (though Moore's case regarding the availability of weapons in the U.S. is clearly addressed). But if you value your own ability to feel, think and interact with movies, you might agree with me that this lack of conclusiveness is one of the film's greatest virtues.

Elephant isn't a perfect film but a probing, conflicted, at times unsure and ultimately very valuable one, both aesthetically and sociologically. If one thing we can all agree on is the importance of really spending time with young people, you can't fault van Sant here for his attempt to do just that. Very little, to my eye, seems imposed upon the kids in *Elephant*. If they seem too neatly confined into roles of jocks, nerds, pretty buxom girls (who all nonchalantly assemble in the toilet to bring up lunch) and outsiders, you probably need to spend more time in a high school. (And it's worth noting that John and Eli, two of the first kids we meet, don't fit into



Alicia Miles and John Robinson in *Elephant*

any category at all.) If *Elephant* makes any huge point, it has to do with the way conformity—in all its manifestations—can rob kids of foresight and self-worth even more than the abuse or expectations of their peers.

THE FILM'S TITLE refers to two things: Alan Clarke's identically titled short film (which initially inspired van Sant) about a series of killings in Northern Ireland that gave no clue as to who bears responsibility for them, and, more directly, an image that appears in the background of the home of one of van Sant's two killers. Van Sant has said that the film is about this "elephant in the living room that no one wants to mention." Whether van Sant feels there's something essential attached to this symbol or whether it's simply his equivalent to *Citizen Kane's* "Rosebud" is entirely ambiguous. The kids who wind up killing their schoolmates in *Elephant* are initially interchangeable with the other characters. It's only close to the end that

we learn enough disquieting facts about them to distinguish them: a vague interest in fascism, a frustrated musical talent and a pact that seemingly can't be reversed. (The latent homosexuality that emerges strikes me as inconsequential: it's more a last-ditch attempt at affection than a declaration of sexual preference.)

Inevitably, when the killings finally do commence, *Elephant* just sort of fizzles out, the murderers' expressionless faces revealing nothing and the final moment merely emphasizing the randomness of it all. Still, what we're left with is more useful than any polemic: one person's attempt to recreate the ominous events leading up to a disaster, a hunt for scattered clues that will offer each viewer different information that they can only piece together afterward in their own individual ways. •

ELEPHANT

Written and directed by Gus van Sant • Starring Alex Frost, Eric Deulen and John Robinson • Opens Fri, Nov 28

Gas menagerie

Benzina tells a souped-up tale of petrol-pumping, mother-killing lesbians

BY JOSEF BRAUN

After the sloppy, juvenile nihilism of the grossly overrated and ultra-violent revenge girl flick *Baise-Moi*, the goofy play on convention and male action fantasy in Italian director Monica Stambri's feature debut *Benzina* seems all the more charming. Based on the novel by Elena Stancanello, *Benzina* is in many ways a very silly movie, but it's often quite a sly one too, removing the significance of gender from the Oedipus myth and blending a number of exploitation genres into something fresh and fun, even if the tone is more lightweight (and less bloody) than audiences prefer their female empowerment flicks to be.

"So you quit school to become a lesbian gas station attendant," says the bold, buxom mama (Mariella Valentini) of wallflower runaway Stella (Maya Sansa) as she enters said station in a cream-coloured power suit. Attractive, bourgeois and the epitome of straight, Stella's mother has come to reclaim her daughter from the clutches of sexy, curly-haired petrol-pumper Lenni

(Regina Orioli) and send her back to school to empower herself the old-fashioned way: through middle-class education. Mama's power over Stella is clearly wrapped up in a mixture of deeply ingrained authority, physical intimidation and not-so-subtle sexual manipulation, and it comes as no surprise that once Lenni, detester of authority figures and defender of

REVUE FOREIGN

sexual freedom, bursts into the room, Mama is going to have to die.

THIS "ACCIDENTAL" DEATH is lazily thrown together, but it serves a purpose: nothing is going to happen for Stella until her oppressor is eliminated. And just as soon as Stella and Lenni get the station tidied up and conceive of a plan to dispose of Mama's remains, trouble arrives with the first of many appearances of an obnoxious carload of rednecked brats and their camcorder-wielding *Maxim* cover girlfriend (precisely the kind of idiots who violently resent any woman who doesn't have girl-on-girl sex solely for the benefit of straight men). So while Stella copes with the voice of her mother that still haunts her conscience and grapples with her sexual identity, Lenni tries to ward off suspicion of any foul play with her quick wit and her appealing Joan Jett

sneer—but once the girls hit the road, assholes never seem far behind. The point underlying the two women's adventure is that one must learn to trust in the other's youthful inexperience, while the other needs to have faith in her girlfriend's recklessness.

Benzina is more Russ Meyer than *Baise-Moi*, more B-movie than snuff-porn. The sex in *Benzina* is softcore and should appeal to sensibilities both gay and straight, although the first love scene (which takes place during Stella's first job interview with Lenni) is really dumb. But thankfully, Stambri, her fine, foxy actors and screenwriter Anne Riitta Ciccone are in on the joke and simply ask us to play along. The particular brand of voyeurism and trashiness on display in *Benzina* also means that sex and death are permanently intertwined, flowing on the same circuit, so that even when the girls pass the scene of a fatal highway accident, the dead motorcyclist sprawled out on the pavement reveals a hefty bundle of cleavage bulging from beneath her black leather jacket. J.G. Ballard would no doubt be pleased. •

BENZINA
Directed by Monica Stambri • Written by Anne Riitta Ciccone and Monica Stambri • Starring Maya Sansa, Regina Orioli and Mariella Valentini • Zeidler Hall, The Citadel • Fri-Mon, Nov 28-Dec 1 (9pm) • Metro Cinema • 425-9212

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How the drunk stole Christmas

Bad Santa is the most hilariously cynical holiday comedy ever made

By PAUL MATWYCHUK

So I finally went to see *Love Actually* over the weekend, which as you may know takes place in London during the Christmas season and concludes with an absolutely shameless sequence involving three or four different sets of Londoners running around on Christmas Eve desperately declaring their love for each other. Snow's falling everywhere, there's a bunch of cute little grade-schoolers putting on a massive Christmas pageant, cheerful orchestral music blares from the soundtrack every time someone kisses someone else and, if you're like me, the whole ghastly thing is as stomach-turning as downing an entire punchbowl of eggnog in a single gulp.

Which is why I laughed so hard at **Bad Santa**, in which Billy Bob Thornton plays one of the most reprehensible main characters in cinematic history—a bitter, foul-mouthed, alcoholic, self-loathing criminal whose

preferred modus operandi is to hire himself out as a shopping mall Santa, use his position to scope out the store's security system, rob the place blind on Christmas Eve and live on the profits until next December rolls around. Let me tell you, in a world where *Love Actually* reigns supreme, moments like the one in *Bad Santa* where a kid says he wishes he could get a stuffed pink elephant for Christmas, to which Thornton replies,

REVUE
COMEDY

"Well, kid, why don't you wish in one hand and shit in the other and see which one fills up faster?" are like a balm to the soul.

Bad Santa was executive-produced by Joel and Ethan Coen, who also came up with the film's basic concept. But even though John Requa and Glenn Ficarra get sole screenplay credit, the Coens' sensibility still pervades the entire enterprise, from the hilarious deadpan voice-over Thornton recites from his barstool over the opening credit sequence (the words *Bad Santa* appear on the screen just as Thornton stumbles into the alleyway behind the bar and vomits into the snow) to the delight the film takes in watching small-time crooks devise

brilliant plans to strike it rich, only to have greed, incompetence, double-crossing partners and cruelly bad luck conspire to screw them all up. (Oddly, *Bad Santa* feels more like a Coen film than *Intolerable Cruelty*, which Joel actually directed.)

Supposedly, the film is the story of Thornton's redemption—he winds up serving as a kind of father figure to a lonely fat kid (Brett Kelly) whose read dad is serving a prison term for embezzlement—but except for the very last scene the script sustains a nearly toxic level of misanthropy from the moment Thornton appears onscreen. This is a Christmas movie whose most heartwarming plot development involves Thornton beating up a bunch of little kids. ("I think I've turned a corner," he says later. "It felt like I was finally doing something constructive with my life.")

IT'S NOT THAT Thornton takes any particular pleasure in being rude to every kid who sits on his lap; the beauty of his performance is the way he suggests the character can't even be bothered anymore to pretend he's interested in them. Or life, for that matter. When one kid says he wants something that sounds like "a fraggle stick car" for Christmas, all Thornton can say in reply is "What the fuck is



Billy Bob Thornton and Brett Kelly (right) in *Bad Santa*

that?" That might not sound like a particularly inspired bit of dialogue on the page, but Thornton packs so much bone-dead, hungover weariness into his voice—as if the effort of figuring out what the hell a "fraggle stick car" is might be enough to tip him over into the final abyss of despair—that the line gets one of the biggest laughs in the entire movie.

There are a few moments where it feels as though the film is indulging in tastelessness for tastelessness' sake—like the scene that begins with a pointless close-up of the spoonful of stool softener that Bernie Mac (playing a shifty store detective) is stirring into a glass of water. But for the most part, director Terry Zwigoff keeps the mood invigoratingly cyni-

cal and raunchy instead of merely ugly and mean-spirited. (He even provides a lovely final role for the late John Ritter as a wimpy store manager.) Zwigoff first came to moviegoers' attention with *Crumb*, his brilliant documentary about grouchy, animalistic cartoonist R. Crumb, and *Bad Santa* is a film Crumb would definitely approve of. It's a rotten fruitcake of a movie, a dirty snowbank, a Santa suit with stains on the crotch—and it's exactly what I wanted for Christmas this year. ♦

BAD SANTA

Directed by Terry Zwigoff • Written by John Requa and Glenn Ficarra • Starring Billy Bob Thornton, Tony Cox, Brett Kelly and Bernie Mac • Opens Fri, Nov 28

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Opie Indians

Ron Howard's *The Missing* is an exciting but borderline-racist adventure yarn

BY MINISTER FAUST

The Missing. Ron Howard's new genre-crossing feminist/mystical Western/chase picture based on Thomas Eidsion's novel *The Last Ride*, stars Tommy Lee Jones as Jones, a tracker of (originally) indeterminate ethnicity who reunites with his estranged daughter Maggie Gilkeson (Cate Blanchett). Gilkeson, folk-doctor and tough frontier-woman in 19th-century New Mexico, is fighting to save her daughter who's been kidnapped by a band of Apache deserters from the U.S. Army who sell white women into Mexican prostitution. Gilkeson is strong, but she'll need Jones's knowledge of Apache culture and its capacity for violence if she's to retrieve her daughter before the kidnappers reach the Mexican border. *The Missing* is about the clash of worlds: between parents and children, between invaders and indige-

nous people, between past and future—as well as the handful of people who embody both sides of those conflicts and who may heal and seal those rifts.

The Missing is a troubling creature which has been denounced as racist (by the online magazine *Slant*) and shallow (by *Entertainment Weekly*), mostly because of its depiction of its Apache characters. *The Missing* may not be as bad as *Birth of a Nation*, but it's disturbing and infuriating nonetheless. In real life, Ameri-

their selling of white women into Mexican prostitution reinforces the notion of "bad darkies" that was such a mainstay of the Western genre, and much of American film, period—a manifestation of racist fear magnified through the fear of polluting white womanhood. Yes, the film pays homage to Native American culture more than it does to Native Americans, but the character who's the main source of that homage undercuts the homage itself. It's a rather comfortable genocidal invader position to take: we hunted you to near-extinction but gosh, you had a swell culture with all your spirits and nature-knowledge and beads and such.

AND YET I CAN'T DENY that *The Missing* is a thrilling motion picture with some fascinating characters and scenes that put cold, sharp steel right at my throat, not to mention gaspingly beautiful panoramas that made me want to take a wilderness trek. Cinematographer Salvatore Totino lovingly paints the screen with wintry prairies, badlands and distant mountains, and his constant attention to animals renders them strikingly alive in way that I've never seen before.

Cate Blanchett and Tommy Lee



Cate Blanchett and Tommy Lee Jones in *The Missing*

Jones have superb chemistry as daughter and father, and the performance of Evan Rachel Wood (from *Thirteen*) as Blanchett's daughter is especially impressive. The film is as much about strong women as it is about strong children. They're real kids—afraid and petulant and foolish and immature and curious and strong and brave and ultimately heroic. Despite a far too easy ending and a few pacing lulls (the film is too long), *The Missing* is exciting in a grand, old-Hollywood way, from panoramas to punch-outs. A few moments of violence, from a tooth-pulling to a murder, are so perfectly constructed that they reached right inside me and yanked my spinal cord.

At the same time, the more I think about this film, the more angry I get at its depiction of native peoples. I'm all in favour of Hollywood backing away from desexualized, hyper-saintly, saccharine "safe darkies" who wouldn't scratch a tick on a dick. I'm not against the idea of a movie that contains Indian villains. But a millennial audience has a right to explore the richness and complexity of *all* a film's characters, not just the ones played by famous white actors. ♦

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FILM WEEKLY

NEW THIS WEEK

Bad Santa (CO, FP) Billy Bob Thornton, Tony Cox, Bernie Mac and Lauren Graham star in *Ghost World* director Terry Zwigoff's ultra-cynical Yuletide comedy about an alcoholic, down-at-heel thief who plans to rob a department store while working as a mall Santa, only to have his conscience pricked when he befriends a lonely eight-year-old boy.

Benzina (M) Regina Orioli and Maya Sansa star in director Monica Stambriani's outrageous road movie about a pair of Italian lesbians who leave the mid-of-nowhere gas station they operate together and hit the highway for a *Thelma and Louise*-style series of misadventures. *Zedler Hall, The Citadel*; Fri-Mon, Nov 28-Dec 1 (9pm)

Downtime (M) Winnipeg director Greg Hane's landmark low-budget 1986 film, a bleak but grimly funny portrait of young people trying to survive their lack of money and their understimulating prairie surroundings. *Zedler Hall, The Citadel*; Sun-Mon, Nov 30-Dec 1 (7pm)

Elephant (GA) Eric Deulen, Alex Frost and John Robinson star in *My Own Private Idaho* writer/director Gus Van Sant's disquieting, defiantly nondidactic Palme d'Or-winning drama, inspired by the Columbine massacre, about a day in the life of an average American high school that is shattered by a sudden outbreak of violence.

Falling Angels (CO) Miranda Richardson, Callum Keith Rennie and Katherine Isabelle star in *Rollercoaster* director Scott Smith's film version of Barbara Gowdy's novel about three sisters growing up in a bland Canadian suburb in the late '60s, who belatedly start to rebel against their repressive father and alcoholic mother.

The Films of Richard Massingham (M) A surprisingly lively collection of 1940s advertisements, instructional short subjects and government propaganda, all directed by the undeservedly neglected British filmmaker Richard Massingham. *Zedler Hall, The Citadel*; Fri-Sat, Nov 28-29 (7pm)

My Life Without Me (P) Sarah Polley, Scott Speedman, Amanda Plummer and Mark Ruffalo star in *Things I Never Told You* writer/director Isabel Coixet's drama about a young woman who learns she will die of cancer in three months and sets to work tying up the loose ends of her life, all the while keeping her imminent demise a secret from her family.



Now, Voyager (EFS) Bette Davis, Paul Henreid and Claude Rains star in *The Corn Is Green* director Irving Rapper's seminal 1942 tearjerker about a mousy spinster who blossoms into a glamorous beauty thanks to a miraculous psychotherapy program and enters into a cigarette-fueled shipboard romance with a handsome married man. *Provincial Museum Auditorium* (702 Ave & 128 St); Mon, Dec 1 (8pm)

Tupac: Resurrection (CO) Director Lauren Lazin's documentary about the life and untimely death of rap star Tupac Shakur, featuring extensive rare and previously unseen home movies, photographs and concert footage.

FIRST-RUN MOVIES

Brother Bear (CO, FP) The voices of Joaquin Phoenix, Rick Moranis and Dave Thomas are featured in this Disney animated adventure about a vengeful native hunter who learns some valuable lessons about life and nature when he is magically transformed into a bear. Songs by Phil Collins.

Bus 174 (P) Director José Padilha's gripping documentary unravels the life story of Sandro do Nascimento, a homeless Brazilian man who captured the nation's attention in 2000 when he hijacked a bus in Rio de Janeiro and spent the next several hours locked in a showdown with the Rio police. In Portuguese with English subtitles.

Dr. Seuss' The Cat in the Hat (CO, FP, LD) Mike Myers, Alec Baldwin, Kelly Preston and Dakota Fanning star in director Bo Welch's film version of the classic children's book about a boisterous feline who pays an uninvited visit on two kids while their mother is gone and gleefully sets to work destroying their house.

Eif (CO, FP) Will Ferrell, James Caan and Zooey Deschanel star in *Swingers* director Jon Favreau's fish-out-of-water holiday comedy about a human man who was raised as an elf at the North Pole and who now travels to New York City hoping to locate his biological father.

Gothika (CO, FP) Halle Berry, Penélope Cruz and Robert Downey Jr. star in *The Crimson Rivers* director Mathieu Kassovitz's supernatural thriller about a criminal psychologist who wakes up confined in a mental institution for the murder of her husband, a crime she has absolutely no memory of committing.

The Haunted Mansion (CO, FP, LD) Eddie Murphy, Terence Stamp, Marsha Thomason

and Jennifer Tilly star in *Stuart Little* director Rob Minkoff's effects-heavy comedy, based on the Disney theme park attraction, about a family that encounters all manner of ghosts and poltergeists during a visit to a haunted house.

Kill Bill: Volume 1 (CO) Uma Thurman, Lucy Liu, Daryl Hannah and Vivica A. Fox star in the first installment of *Pulp Fiction* writer/director Quentin Tarantino's ultraviolent homage to '70s exploitation flicks, about a vengeful female assassin who miraculously survives her employer's attempt to rub her out, and begins methodically picking off her killers, one by one.

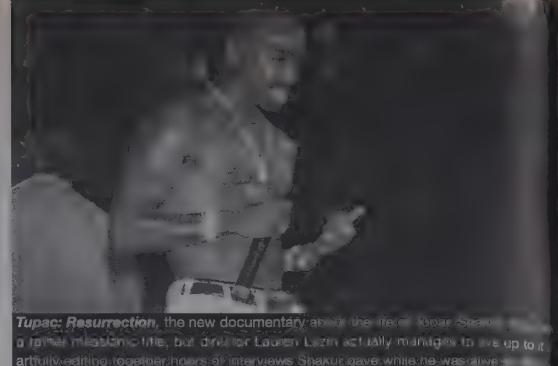
Looney Tunes: Back in Action (CO, FP) Brendan Fraser and Jenny Elfman star alongside dozens of beloved Warner Brothers cartoon characters in *Gremlins* director Joe Dante's globe-hopping blend of animation and live action, in which Bugs Bunny hooks up with a former Hollywood stuntman to track down a legendary lost gemstone.

Love Actually (CO, FP) Hugh Grant, Liam Neeson, Emma Thompson, Alan Rickman, Keira Knightley, Colin Firth and Laura Linney star in writer/director Richard Curtis's all-star ensemble romantic comedy, which tells eight interlocking stories about various Londoners (including the prime minister of England) falling in and out of love during the Christmas season.

Master and Commander: The Far Side of the World (CO, FP) Russell Crowe and Paul Bettany star in *Witness* director Peter Weir's waterlogged adventure yarn, based on the novels of Patrick O'Brian, in which 19th-century British sea captain Jack Aubrey and ship surgeon Stephen Maturin brave storms and cannonfire as they pursue a French "super-frigate" from Cape Horn to the Galapagos Islands.

The Matrix: Revolutions (CO, FP) Keanu Reeves, Carrie-Anne Moss, Laurence Fishburne and Hugo Weaving star in the final installment of directors Andy and Larry Wachowski's groundbreaking sci-fi trilogy about a rebel army's life-or-death battle against the machines that have enslaved most of mankind within a computer-generated virtual world.

The Missing (CO, FP, LD) Cate Blanchett, Tommy Lee Jones, Evan Rachel Wood and Val Kilmer star in *A Beautiful Mind* director Ron Howard's grim Western about a man who returns home to his unforgiving family years after abandoning them, but must leave them again to rescue his granddaughter when she is kidnapped by a band of outlaw army deserters.



Tupac: Resurrection, the new documentary about the "God of Rap," is a total misnomer title, but director Lauren Lazin actually manages to live up to it artfully editing together hours of interviews Shakur gave while he was alive. *Love Actually*, in effect, "Harriet" has fun from beyond the grave. The film has been criticized for Lazin's strivings to drabber, meaningful with the messiness in Shakur's charismatic persona—especially the way his music's glorification of "thug life" seemed to contradict everything his mother, former *Black Panther* icon, But the film's wealth of rare concert footage and family photographs will be treasure trove to diehard fans. Plus, the vintage snapshots of Shakur's amazingly fast-growing dad offer reassuring proof he's never had to have to live through the occasional awkward phase,

Mystic River (CO, FP) Sean Penn, Kevin Bacon and Tim Robbins star in *Unforgiven* director Clint Eastwood's moody drama, set in working-class Boston, about three childhood friends whose traumatic memories of the past are revived when one, now a police detective, begins to suspect another of killing the third's daughter. Based on the novel by Dennis Lehane.

Radio (CO) Cuba Gooding Jr., Ed Harris, Alfre Woodard and Debra Winger star in *Summer Catch* director Mike Tolkin's inspirational sports drama about the relationship between a small-town South Carolina football coach and the illiterate, mentally challenged man he adopts as his unlikely protégé.

Runaway Jury (CO) Dustin Hoffman, Gene Hackman, John Cusack and Rachel Weisz star in *Kiss the Girls* director Gary Fleder's big-screen version of John Grisham's legal thriller about a juror on a landmark case against a gun manufacturer who attempts to blackmail the two competing attorneys into paying him to persuade the other jurors to decide in their favour.

Scary Movie 3 (FP) Anna Faris, Charlie Sheen, Leslie Nielsen, Queen Latifah and Denise Richards star in the latest installment of the popular series of raunchy horror-movie spoofs, featuring send-ups of such films as *The Ring*, *The Others*, *The Matrix* and *Signs*. Directed by David Zucker (*The Naked Gun*).

The School of Rock (FP) Jack Black, Joan Cusack and Mike Robbins star in the screenplay star in *Dazed and Confused* director Richard Linklater's come about a would-be rock star who takes a job as substitute teacher at an upstart private school and immediately begins transforming his room of 10-year-olds into a kick-ass rock band.

The Singing Detective (P) Robert Downey Jr., Robin Wright Penn, Jeremy Northam and Michael Gibson star in *Mother Night* director Keith Murnau's adaptation of Dennis Potter's acclaimed TV miniseries about a misanthropic detective novelist who ponders his life while confined to hospital bed with a hideous skin disease.

Timeline (CO, FP, LD) Paul Walker, Frank O'Connor, Gerard Butler and Billy Connolly star in *Ladyhawke* director Richard Donner's adventure yarn about three Yale students who must travel back in time to 14th-century France to rescue a trapped history professor and return him to the present. Based on the novel by Michael Crichton.

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GOTHIKA
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Violence. No passes. Fr-Sun 3.40 6.50 9.50

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Violence. Daily 12.30 3.30 6.40 9.45

LOVE ACTUALLY
Sexual content. Daily 12.40 3.50 7.10 10.00

LOONEY TUNES: BACK IN ACTION
Daily 1.20

THE MISSING
Violence. No passes. Daily 12.10 3.15 6.30 9.30

TIMELINE
Violence. Daily 1.10 4.10 7.40 10.20

WEST MALL 8

8882-170 St., 444-1829

LOST IN TRANSLATION
Fn-Mon-Thu 4.00 9.00

Sat Sun 1.55 4.05 6.40 9.00

THE RUNDOWN

Fn Mon-Thu 6.45 9.10

Sat-Sun 2.05 4.20 6.45 9.10

UNDERWORLD

Gory violence. Fn Mon-Thu 7.00 9.35

Sat-Sun 1.50 4.25 7.00 9.35

IN THE CUT

Sexual content. Fn Mon-Thu 6.50 9.20

Sat-Sun 1.45 4.15 6.50 9.20

INTOLERABLE CRUELTY

Coarse language. Fri Mon-Thu 7.30 9.45
Sat-Sun 2.15 4.40 7.30 9.45

FALLING ANGELS

Sexual content

Fri Mon-Thu 7.20 9.30

Sat-Sun 2.10 4.35 7.20 9.30

MYSTIC RIVER

Coarse language. Fn Mon-Thu 6.30 9.15

Sat-Sun 2.00 6.30 9.15

THE SCHOOL OF ROCK

Fn Mon-Thu 7.10 9.40

Sat-Sun 2.00 4.30 7.10 9.40

4211-139 Ave., 472-7600

BAD SANTA

Crude sexual content throughout, not recommended for children. Daily 1.30 3.40 6.30 9.20

DR. SEUSS' THE CAT IN THE HAT
No passes. Daily 12.00 2.15 4.30 7.00 9.30

BROTHER BEAR

Daily 12.20 2.30 4.45 7.20

THE MATRIX REVOLUTIONS

Violence. Mon-Thu 9.25

No passes. Fr-Sun 9.25

ELF

Daily 12.20 2.30 4.45 7.20

THE HAUNTED MANSION

Frightening scenes. Daily 12.20 2.30 4.45 7.20

LOONEY TUNES: BACK IN ACTION

Daily 12.10

LOVE ACTUALLY

Sexual content. Daily 1.00 4.00 6.50 9.45

GOTHIKA

Violence, disturbing content.

Daily 12.50 3.10 5.30 7.45 10.10

THE HAUNTED MANSION

Frightening scenes. Daily 12.25 2.40 5.15 7.40 10.05

THE MISSING

Violence. No passes. Daily 12.40 4.10 7.10 10.00

TIMELINE

Violence. Daily 1.15 3.50 7.15 10.15

LOONEY TUNES: BACK IN ACTION

Fri-Mon 12.35 2.35 5.15 7.15 Thu 7.15

THE MATRIX REVOLUTIONS

Violence. No passes. Daily 9.45

ELF

Fri-Mon 12.25 3.40 6.55 9.35

Tue-Wed 6.55 9.35

MASTER AND COMMANDER: THE FAR SIDE OF THE WORLD

Violence. Fri-Mon 12.00 3.15 6.40 9.55 Tue-Thu 6.40 9.55

LOONEY TUNES: BACK IN ACTION

Fri-Mon 12.15 2.20

LOVE ACTUALLY

Sexual content. Fri-Mon 1.00 4.00 7.15 10.15

Tue-Thu 7.15 10.15

KILL BILL: VOLUME I

Gory violence. Fn-Tue Thu 2.10 5.10 8.10 10.45

Wed 2.10 10.45

RUNAWAY JURY

Violence. Daily 9.00

RADIO

Fri-Wed 1.40 4.10 7.40 10.00

Thu 1.40 4.10 7.10 10.00

BROTHER BEAR

Daily 12.15 2.40 4.45 7.15 9.20

LOVE ACTUALLY

Sexual content. Daily 12.50 3.45 6.50 9.50

THE MATRIX REVOLUTIONS

Violence. No passes. Fri-Sun 12.30 3.30 6.40 9.50

Sat 12.30 3.30 6.40 9.50

ELF

Daily 1.20 2.20 3.50 4.50 6.45 7.20 9.15 9.45

MASTER AND COMMANDER: THE FAR SIDE OF THE WORLD

Violence. Fn-Sun 12.10 1.10 3.10 4.20 6.40 9.40

Sat 1.10 3.10 4.20 6.40 9.40

THE MISSING

Violence. No passes. Fri-Sun 12.30 3.30 6.40 9.50

Sat 12.30 3.30 6.40 9.50

CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN

No passes. Fn-Sun 12.00 1.00 2.15 3.15 4.30 5.30 6.40 7.40 8.15 9.40

7.00 7.45 9.15 10.00

GOTHIKA

Violence, disturbing content

Daily 1.40 4.40 7.20 9.45

BROTHER BEAR

Daily 12.20 2.30 4.45 7.20 9.15

LOVE ACTUALLY

Sexual content. Fn-Mon 1.00 4.00 7.15 10.15

Tue-Thu 7.15 10.15

THE MATRIX REVOLUTIONS

Violence. No passes. Daily 1.00 4.00 7.15 10.15

10.00 10.00 Mon Tue Wed Thu 7.10 10.00

LOONEY TUNES: BACK IN ACTION

Fri-Mon 12.20 2.20 5.20 7.15 7.15 Thu 7.15

SCARY MOVIE 3

Crude content. Fn-Sun 1.00 3.45 6.45 9.45 Mon Tue Wed Thu 7.00 9.45

9.35 Mon Tue Wed Thu 6.45 9.35

BAD SANTA

Crude sexual content throughout, not recommended for children. Fri-Mon 12.40 2.40 4.20 7.00 9.20

9.40 Tue-Thu 7.00 9.20 9.40

DR. SEUSS' THE CAT IN THE HAT

Fri-Mon 12.00 2.00 4.20 4.40 6.45 9.00

Tue-Thu 6.45 9.00

GOTHIKA

Violence, disturbing content

Fri-Mon 1.45 4.25 7.00 9.25 9.50

Mon Tue Thu 7.00 7.30 9.25 9.50

LOONEY TUNES: BACK IN ACTION

Fri-Mon 12.20 2.20 5.20 7.15 7.15 Thu 7.15

SCARY MOVIE 3

Crude content. Fn-Sun 1.00 3.45 6.45 9.45

Mon Tue Wed Thu 7.00 9.45

BROTHER BEAR

Daily 1.20 2.20 4.45 7.20 9.15

LOVE ACTUALLY

Sexual content. Fn-Mon 1.00 4.00 7.15 10.15

Tue-Thu 7.15 10.15

KILL BILL: VOLUME II

Gory violence. Fn-Tue Thu 2.10 5.10 8.10 10.45

Wed 2.10 10.45

RUNAWAY JURY

Violence. Daily 9.00

RADIO

Fri-Wed 1.40 4.10 7.40 10.00

Thu 1.40 4.10 7.10 10.00

BROTHER BEAR

Daily 12.15 2.40 4.45 7.20 9.15

LOVE ACTUALLY

Sexual content. Fn-Mon 1.00 4.00 7.15 10.15

Tue-Thu 7.15 10.15

THE MATRIX REVOLUTIONS

Violence. No passes. Fn-Sun 1.00 3.45 6.45 9.45

Sat 1.00 3.45 6.45 9.45

ELF

Daily 1.20 2.20 3.50 4.50 6.50 8.10 9.40

9.40 Mon Tue Wed Thu 7.20 9.40

MASTER AND COMMANDER: THE FAR SIDE OF THE WORLD

Violence. Fn-Sun 1.00 3.45 6.45 9.45

Sat 1.00 3.45 6.45 9.45

LOONEY TUNES: BACK IN ACTION

Fri-Mon 12.20 2.20 5.20 7.15 7.15 Thu 7.15

SCARY MOVIE 3

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MASTER AND COMMANDER: THE FAR SIDE OF THE WORLD

Violence. Fn-Sun 1.00 3.45 6.45 9.45

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SCARY MOVIE 3

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Mon Tue Wed Thu 7.00 9.45

BROTHER BEAR

Daily 1.20 2.20 4.45 7.20 9.15

LOVE ACTUALLY

Sexual content. Fn-Mon 1.00 4.00 7.15 10.15

Tue-Thu 7.15 10.15

THE MATRIX REVOLUTIONS

Violence. No passes. Fn-Sun 1.00 3.45 6.45 9.45

Sat 1.00 3.45 6.45 9.45

Secret expirer

Sarah Polley won't tell anyone she's dying in *My Life Without Me*

BY JOSEF BRAUN

Spanish filmmaker Isabel Coixet's Canadian feature *My Life Without Me* was inspired by a short story by Nanci Kincaid in which a young woman suddenly discovers she is dying and decides to tell everyone she knows. The overwhelming distinction between Kincaid's story and Coixet's film, however, is that in Coixet's version the young woman tells absolutely no one—not her lov-

ing husband or her two small daughters, nor best friend or mother in whose backyard she and her family reside in a cramped trailer.

This idea of choosing to hide a terminal illness (in this case a rare form of ovarian cancer) nicely subverts the usual expectations of a conventional weepie and is, I think, a potent and complex one. (Unsurpris-

ingly, the film is executive produced by Pedro Almodóvar, who is something of an expert in subversive soap opera.) In Milan Kundera's wonderful novel *Immortality*, for example, a much older widow makes a similar choice: to be remembered, she feels,

is a kind of burden, so she methodically goes about abandoning her familiar life and erasing traces of her being so that she may die in sweet solitude. As is usually the case with Kundera, the character's motivations are discussed philosophically in third person and rendered altogether unambiguous.

QUITE WISELY, Coixet's approach leaves her heroine's motives more open to interpretation—or at least that seems to be the idea. Anne (Sarah Polley), quite understandably, declines treatment so that she can spend her final days outside the confines of a hospital and tells her doctor, the only person aware of her condition, that they must keep her illness secret because she doesn't want to put her family through the trial of watching her die. Her intentions sound noble and simplistic and audiences will easily recognize them as false or at best only partially true: regardless of how she rationalizes it, Anne is a young, largely unfulfilled woman and by keeping her death to herself her final days will be a far richer and freer experience than they would be if everyone who loved her huddled about, reeling from shock and grief.

One night in a diner, Anne makes a list of "things to do before I die,"



SARAH POLLEY AND DEBORAH HARRY IN *MY LIFE WITHOUT ME*

which includes visiting her father in prison, making tapes for each of her daughters' birthdays until they're 18, finding a nice replacement wife for her husband Don and making someone fall in love with her. (She's never had a sexual partner aside from Don.) Clearly, some of these choices are highly questionable, and some are downright condescending or egomaniacal. Anne has no problem with the new lover part, since a handsome, brooding romantic transient named Lee (played with great humour and conflicted emotional undercurrents by Mark Ruffalo) is practically stalking her, but she never seems to clue into the fact that encouraging his affections and future hopes is an incredibly cruel thing to do. That's just fine for the purposes of the narrative, but the problem is that Coixet doesn't seem to clue into this fact either, and ultimately the story of Anne's dying is frustratingly left in the

realm of naive fantasy.

So it's with considerable reservations that I recommend *My Life Without Me*. Coixet's exploration of her themes is incomplete, yet the questions she raises—and the trouble her heroine gets herself into—are utterly compelling. As well, the quirky lightness of the film often works in its counterpoint to its inherent gravity. Most importantly, *My Life Without Me* may be the best showcase yet for the talents of Sarah Polley. Very much a woman here, Polley brilliantly underplays every step of Anne's journey, yet still allows us to sense the fragility of her irreverent brat face in the shadow of death. □

MY LIFE WITHOUT ME

Written and directed by Isabel Coixet
Starring Sarah Polley, Scott Speedman,
Deborah Harry and Mark Ruffalo
Opens Fri, Nov 1

Dr. Richard's almanac

The quirky educational films of Richard Massingham enjoy a revival

BY BRIAN GIBSON

Early in the 20th century, if a certain Dr. William Carlos Williams had practised medicine all his life in Rutherford, New Jersey, dabbling in some verse about the mumps or angina now and then, literature wouldn't have "The Red Wheelbarrow" or *Paterson*. So if, during the '30s and '40s, a Senior Medical Officer at the London Fever hospital had gone beyond making ads, educational trailers and propaganda films... well, who knows what Richard Massingham could have been remembered for in the cinematic world?

It's clear from the recently restored and collected *The Films of Richard Massingham* retrospective at Metro Cinema this weekend that, for a self-taught director and actor, the man certainly had skill. *Tell Me If It Hurts* (1933-4) incorporates flashes of passing traffic, shot from beneath a glass table, a Hitchcockian look at a swirling drain and a psychedelic sequence of flashes and sparks. Massingham himself, a Peter Ustinov lookalike, played an absent-minded, dopey everyman in many of these films, using his rubbery

face to express worry about the cars zipping around him in *Pedestrian Crossing* or despondency in the gloomy world of *What a Life!*

The most inspired films here are Massingham's instructional trailers, which offered Brits tips on truly mundane aspects of everyday life. There's a Monty Python-esque piece about how to use a crosswalk properly, and a *Run Lola Run*-ish sequence where a man meets the people he would have hit if he had been driving inattentively. The director's medical day job briefly

REVUE RETROSPECTIVE

emerges in two different bits, both starring the buffoonish Massingham, about the importance of sneezing and coughing into one's handkerchief. And *Tell Me If It Hurts* is a blackly comic look at one man's (Russell Waters) visit to the dentist. A long stay with waiting-room magazines is finally broken by the ominous visit to the seemingly sadistic tooth doctor, whose various tools look like objects out of a dental *Dead Ringers*.

MASSINGHAM'S LONGER WORKS, however, could use the punchier editing and zanier ideas of his short pieces. *They Travel By Air* is a largely unimaginative 1947 training film designed for the staff of BOAC airlines. *What a Life!* is too long and never finds its tone. And *The Cure* is a dull,

talky skit about a man with back pain.

Of course, the films sometimes seem amusingly dated to a modern audience—for instance, *Watertown* gripes about a '30s traffic jam in London (i.e., some cars and buses at a stoplight, plus a horse-drawn buggy) seem quaint and petty. But at least there are no hilariously self-important, ultra-serious Troy McClure moments here, as there purpose were in those black-and-white educational films *The Simpsons* loves to parody (*Locker Room Towel Fights*; *The Blinding of Larry Driscoll*; *Alice's Adventures Through the Windshield Glass*).

At their best, the works that Massingham produced or directed employed clever comic visuals. His skill and imagination are not to be matched by raw talent, and Massingham was no Chaplin or Keaton. The show stretches and lack of compression in his longer films suggest that the man's potential outside the quick-catchy medium of ads or trailers would have been limited. As it is, Massingham remains a curious footnote, a "what if" who has provided film historians and archivists with few interesting social documents and the discerning film buff with some short, whimsical sketches. □

THE FILMS

RICHARD MASSINGHAM

Directed by Richard Massingham • Zeitz Hall, The Citadel • Fri-Sat, Nov 28-29 (7pm) • Metro Cinema • 425-9212

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Love at first Pite



Kidd Pivot's Crystal
Pite is so young
and accomplished
it's actually kind of
annoying

—KATHY OCHOA

You've gotta love Gwyneth Paltrow, and that's what's so aggravating about her. She's odd-looking, acts well, dates cute rock stars and can do a perfect Eng-

lish accent. Plus she can sing and is fluent in four languages. You go see one of her films, and unless it's *View From the Top*, it's probably good, she's probably funny in it and she probably seems like she'd be a nice person in real life too. Uh-huh... great.

Canadian dance artist Crystal Pite inspires a similarly torturous reaction in the people who see her perform, especially if they're dancers themselves. When she's not performing in her own folk rock band or dancing for some of the world's best ballet companies or working as resident choreographer for the prestigious Les

Ballets Jazz de Montréal, she's creating and touring in her newly-formed dance company Kidd Pivot—and, most vexingly, doing it all with the same seemingly effortless skill.

PREVIEW DANCE

Kidd Pivot makes a stop in Edmonton this weekend with *Uncollected Work*, a full evening of dance performed by Pite and her partner Cori Caulfield. The performance is part of the Vancouver-based company's inaugural Canadian tour and

promises to offer the fresh, innovative approach to both classical and contemporary dance which Pite is famous for. *Uncollected Work* consists of two pieces, "Farther Out" and "Field: Fiction," both inspired by Pite's research into literary genres—"Farther Out" by the world of campy science fiction and "Field: Fiction" by the writer's creative process.

"I knew that the creative process was an auspicious topic for such an early work in one's career," says Pite. But as one looks (enviously) at her career thus far, she definitely seems up to the task. Pite, at a mere 32 years of age, has the kind of bio that puts many a dance career to shame. She danced for Ballet B.C. almost as soon as they could get their hands on her, choreographed really good pieces for companies throughout Canada and won a shelf's worth of awards by the time she was 23. Then, looking for new sources of inspiration (and just because she could), she landed a job dancing with one of the dance world's foremost creative minds, William Forsythe and the Ballet Frankfurt. "When I started working with Forsythe," Pite says, "I began to see a whole new way of approaching movement. He maintains a three-dimensionalism in his dance and dancers that I just hadn't seen before."

She continued her curiosity into all aspects of dance creation even if her role with the company was mainly as a dancer in other artists' works. "Throughout my career," she says, "I've had the opportunity to work with amazing dancers and I studied how they move." This ongoing commitment to developing her own voice would lead to Pite's ultimate goal: "I always knew my final destination was to create and per-

form in my own work, and I can do that anywhere."

LUCKY FOR US, she chose her native Canada as her base of operations and brought back the piece "Field: Fiction," whose European reviews mention her in the same breath as her mentor Forsythe and pioneering dance visionaries like Merce Cunningham and Pina Bausch. Built out of her final year with the Frankfurt Ballet, the work addresses Pite's amazement at how "even these great creators are convinced when beginning a new creative process that they will never have another good idea."

"Field: Fiction" also draws its inspiration from Pulitzer Prize-winning author Annie Dillard's book *The Writing Life*—especially the way Dillard portrays the creative process as one that requires the author to destroy and create at the very same time. "You have to learn to remain true to the content and have the willingness to let go of what is extraneous," Pite says. "I personally always battle between free-flowing, effortless creativity and the lurking judgment of the pragmatic, hard-nosed internal editor."

When you see Pite's seemingly effortless results onstage, however, Pite appears to have emerged from her personal battles unscathed and entirely victorious as she moves her way through space in every conceivable manner except the predictable one. It's enough to make you express, however grudgingly, a bit of genuine gratitude for the Gwyneths of the world. ☀

UNCOLLECTED WORK

Created by Crystal Pite • Performed by Kidd Pivot • Presented by The Brian Webb Dance Company • John L. Haar Theatre • Fri-Sat, Nov 28-29 • 420-1757

know this much is Peru

photographer Naomi Marathalingam brings the Andes Edmonton

AGNIESZKA MATEJKO

"It was incredible," says photographer Naomi Marathalingam, her voice quivering with emotion. "I know why I went there; I didn't make a conscious choice. It was an instinct. I picked up and flew."

"I don't make foolish choices out of bravado," she adds, and yet, for 9 months Marathalingam traveled alone in Peru, living out of a backpack. She did all that she could to assure her safety in a country known for its political instability, but the one instinct that she refused to employ was travel with friends. "If I take people I know into another world, then I'll not go outside myself," she claims. "Alone, I am forced to venture outside, to overcome my fears."

Small, shy and polite by nature, Marathalingam was determined to get to know the local people. It was not an easy task. "South Americans are famously leery of foreigners," she claims. "They have had cameras

shoved in their faces, many are unapproachable. There were times when I was in tears, they were so suspicious." She could have spared herself a lot of trouble by simply taking shots of the spectacular scenery, but nature, in Marathalingam's words, is "too powerful and too overwhelming to tackle." It was the people that she went to meet. "I see the landscape in people's faces, they

the hopeful gazes of teenagers and the occasional stark portrait of a tourist who seems oddly misplaced among all these other, much more exotic characters. "I met some," Marathalingam explains. "Some of them I knew only for a second as I passed by them on the street."

THE MOST MEMORABLE encounter of her trip happened on the first day of her grueling trek to Machu Picchu. "It was 3 p.m.," Marathalingam recalls. "I was climbing for eight hours. I rounded the corner exhausted." There, in a small clearing, leaning against a fence, stood a young local boy. "I stopped and took my camera out of my backpack and I took this picture," she says, pointing at the photograph. "We didn't exchange any words."

As simple and seemingly prosaic as this encounter was something happened in that moment the artist still finds hard to define. Marathalingam felt as though she had met herself as she was many years ago, a young teenaged girl full of dreams, hopes and aspirations. "I wanted to ask him if he wanted to know about the world like I did," she says, "but I couldn't. But his photograph tells me everything."

Like Urul Herrero Peso (whose name she learned later), Marathalingam

PROFILE VISUAL ARTS

are symbolic of the place," she says. "That's where the true richness lies."

Those faces make up Marathalingam's new installation *The Andes Journey*. To help viewers feel that we are right there among the local people, Marathalingam transformed the Fringe Gallery into an interior of a Peruvian hut, painstakingly painting each wall with the textures and earthy colours characteristic of the local architecture and carefully arranging household artifacts she collected during her trip. Here and there she has placed pieces of cardboard against the walls—a typical insulation method in the region. In this homey environment dozens of intimate portraits peer back at the viewer—the weather-beaten faces of the elderly,



Photo: © Naomi Marathalingam

grew up in a culture far removed from the frenetic pace of western life. Her home country of Sri Lanka was also undergoing political turbulence, but like Urul Herrero Peso, she went to school and led a happy life. Also like him, she would dream of places far away from the confines of a traditional culture, separated from the rest of the world by many miles of mountains—or, in Marathalingam's case, the Indian Ocean. "My parents never worried about my future, about challenging the world," she says. "I just knew that I was loved. I had time to dream. I remember endless days. It was so simple, an old-fashioned way of life."

As Marathalingam stands amidst the Peruvian home she's recreated in Edmonton, portraits of the people she met during her trip seem almost like part of her global family. "There is a part of me in each of these people; that's why I gravitate towards them," she explains. "It's like looking through a mirror—and they see me, too, because I am in their eyes."

ANDES JOURNEY:
PHOTOGRAPHY INSTALLATION
By Naomi Marathalingam • Fringe
Gallery • To Nov 30



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ARTS



theatre notes

By PAUL MATWYCHUK
AND PENNY CHOLMONDELEY

Into the Ring • Arts Barns • Nov 28-Dec 7 • preVUE There are no wise, reedy elves or hairy-toed hobbits in Rick Miller's multimedia production of *Into the Ring*. What Miller has brought to the stage, however, is a tale of corrupting power and obsession that pays homage to the master of high fantasy himself, J.R.R. Tolkien.

The Toronto-based playwright, actor and artistic director of WYRD Productions is a self-described Tolkien fanatic. He was always intrigued by the possibility of doing a *Lord of the Rings* stage production but possessed no illusions about his ability to compete with the books or the films that have reigned popular interest in Tolkien's trilogy, a canon that many fans deem untouchable. "We realized that to do a theatrical adaptation would be futile and probably stupid—it would be just too difficult to pull off," he explains. "*The Lord of the Rings* is like a religion to some people; it's almost unparalleled."

Instead, *Into the Ring* focuses on the current hype surrounding Tolkien's work. It chronicles the story of two filmmaking brothers creating a documentary about the *Lord of the Rings* craze and the mystique surrounding Tolkien's life. One brother, the director, is a Tolkien purist seeking to capture truths about the man and his work. His sibling, the producer, is out to sensationalize everything marketable about the popular tale. They inevitably fight for creative control of the film—a battle that has destructive consequences.

Despite being an accomplished solo performer, best known for his one-man Fringe hit *MacHome*, Miller decided early on that he did not want to produce *Into the Ring* alone. He recruited Seattle playwright Dawson Nichols to help him pen the work, and the two frenetic performers play 50 characters between them while maintaining a focus on the personal relationships at the heart of the trilogy. "Within the book there are very clear two-on-two relationships," Miller explains. "Frodo and Sam, Gandalf and Frodo, Arwyn and Aragorn. Having two performers made sense to me."

Besides the difficulties of producing a popular literary work, the two performers faced the added obstacle of geography. Miller worked from his home in Toronto, communicating with Nichols in Seattle primarily through e-mail. Miller is aware of the irony inherent in using technology to produce a Tolkien-inspired play, noting that some scholars suggest the trilogy is an allegory about the amoral mechanization of society. "Tolkien didn't even have a photocopier, let alone e-mail," laughs Miller. "He had to type out an copy of his manuscript

by himself for proofreading."

Skeptical Tolkien fans will enjoy the show for more than its references to the original story, says Miller. To construct the story in a modern setting, he conducted extensive interviews with scholars and academics about Tolkien's life and his body of work. Images and footage of these encounters are integrated into the multimedia elements of the show.

But Miller believes it's ultimately a balance between fantastic descriptive detail and the simplicity of Tolkien's message that continues to attract new generations of fans to the *Rings* series. "*The Lord of the Rings* is storytelling of a heroic nature," he says. "It is also an epic story completely free from irony. Our message is that whether you go to see the films or this play, no matter what, read the book." (PC)

Better business bureau

Better Living • Timms Centre for the Arts • Nov 27-Dec 6 • preVUE My favourite line from George F. Walker's *Better Living* comes early in the play, when a weary-eyed priest named Jack explains his apparent spiritual exhaustion by saying, "I haven't lost my faith. I've just lost my enthusiasm."

"He's at a real crossroads," says U of A B.F.A. student Scott McAdam, who's playing Jack in Studio Theatre's new production of the play. "He's mostly trying to compare the world of God with the reality that he faces every day. He's trying to use the bullets of God, if you will, but he keeps firing blanks." That's a colourful phrase Walker himself would probably be proud to have come up with, and McAdam's co-star Katharine Ford comes up with another one herself when she describes the experience of watching the play's mix of dark themes with Sam Shepard-style absurdist humour as being like "laughing with a lemon in your mouth."

Better Living has been described by one critic as a modern-day takeoff on *King Lear*—except in this version Lear doesn't go crazy and die after wandering the countryside but instead comes back to the castle and starts bossing around his three daughters even more overbearing than ever. But Ford sees a closer parallel between Tom (the patriarch in Walker's play) and a much less well-spoken world leader. "This man who comes into power and is so absolutely paranoid about the coming of bad times," she says, "is pretty much like George W. Bush. And the house where the play is set is like a microcosm of all the crazy people who are ruling the world right now."

"The content is so relevant," agrees McAdam. "Walker writes in a very political fashion and his characters carry a lot of weight and have a lot of presence in the world that surrounds us every day. They're just so much fuller that way—in any given scene, you're not talking about one person and one incident; you're talking about one person and one incident that are fed by all these issues out there in the world."

Unfortunately, Ford plays Tom's helplessly passive daughter Mary Ann, who doesn't get fed by the events unfolding around her so much as she gets ruthlessly battered by them. (Tom

even bullies her into leaving her husband and child and going to work for him, stuffing envelopes at the kitchen table.) Does that make her a tough character for the actor playing her? Like? Ford thinks not. "I think Mary Ann represents the truth that's in everybody," she says. "I think everybody at certain times in the day or certain times in their life want to explore what it's like to completely give up and get completely bulldozed by the environment, but they're never given permission to do that. Mary Ann is saying it's okay once in a while to be pathetic and let other people do your thinking for you."

And the George W. Bush parallel just keep on coming. (PM)

Vie for victory

Martin Badke isn't an actor or a playwright or a director or a designer or a stage manager, and yet he's made one of the year's most significant contributions to Edmonton theatre. That because his entry was chosen as the winner of Fringe Theatre Adventure Name the Fringe contest, and as Badke's suggestion, the official name for the 2004 Fringe Festival will be *La Vie en Fringe*. It's classy, it's romantic, it rolls effortlessly off the tongue and Badke has won himself a Fringe Show pass for thinking it up.

Fringe producer Miki Stricker and Fringe executive director Al Rastogi made the announcement last Monday during an informal ceremony at the Next Act. But the audience was more interested in hearing the results of the Fringe lottery and finding out who among them had landed slots in next summer's Fringe festival and who would have to languish on the waiting list. The lucky playwrights and theatrical troupes include Paul Morgan Dona (who'll be remounting his one-man investigation of Shakespeare's sonnets *Songs for a Dark Lady*), David Bell, Morgan Smith, Rabbit Productions (with a remount of their unfairly neglected, Sterling-nominated 2003 show *Pilk's Madhouse*), Panties Productions and Mark Stubbings (who'll be unveiling *Dust*, his prize-winning entry in the 2003 Alberta Playwriting Competition) as well as English favourites Screwed and Clued and Dreams Theatre. And hooray—after not doing a Fringe show last summer, my mate play *The Play I Did at Last Year's Fringe* got in, too.

Superficial trends among next summer's lineup include a strange fixation on negative adjectives (David Bell's show is called *Despicable*, while Craddock has a show high up on a waiting list called *Deplorable*) and even stranger obsession with fictional teenage detectives (with a show called *Who Is Nancy Drew?* apparently not head-to-head against a show called *Who Killed Nancy Drew?*). Stricker, however, spots a couple of more significant developments, including a strong showing of new work from Calgary and a lot of queer-themed plays. "I don't know if that's a trend or an anomaly," she says, "but I do think shows the openness of the Fringe, an event that really gives people opportunity to take risks, both artistically and personally." (PM)

ARTS WEEKLY

your free listings to 426-2889 or e-mail them to listings@vive.ab.ca. Deadline is Friday at 3pm

DANCE

AL PITÉ John L. Haar Theatre (420-1757) • Presented by Linda Webb Dance Company • Nov. 28-Dec. 1 • \$25 (adult)/\$15 (student/senior) • Tickets available at TIX on the Square

WTON & MOTION John L. Haar Theatre, MacEwan Hall for the Arts, 10045-156 St (497-4343) • Performed by Grant MacEwan College • Dec. 5-6 • Tickets available by phone at 497-4343

GALLERIES/MUSEUMS

33 CYBER CAFÉ The Park Professional Building, 1606 100th Street, Sherwood Park (416-5555) • THE EARTH EXHIBIT Art, sculptures and woodcarving • Sun, Nov. 30 (11am-10pm) • DEVINE VISIONS Sun, Nov. 30 (11am-5pm)

JAMES BUGERA GALLERY 12310 Jasper Ave (482-0422) • WINTER WALK Sat, Nov. 29 (10am-4pm)

BERTA CRAFT COUNCIL GALLERY See What's Happening Downtown

HABSB STUDIO GALLERY See What's Happening Downtown

LA GARE 10308A 81 Ave (988-2400) • POISED EDGE OF NOTHING featuring visual art by Bruce Dobroff • Until Dec. 5

THE CANADIAN NATIVE FRIENDSHIP CENTRE 105-101 St (479-1999) • Annual Aboriginal arts and crafts show • Dec. 6-7 (10am-6pm)

TÉR D'ARTS VISUELS DE L'ALBERTA 9103-95 164-1-3427 • Group show featuring artworks by members of the Centre • Until Dec. 5 • LIFE IN DRAWINGS • Until Dec. 5

MCMILLAN GALLERY 937-82 110 St (497-8252) • CHRISTIE'S ART FAIR: Artworks by Claude Thériault and Jacques Desilets, Dec. 5-17; opening reception, Dec. 5 (7pm), artists in attendance

STL BERGSTROM'S RED GALLERY 937-82 110 St (497-8252) • CHRISTIE'S ART FAIR: 11am-5pm • ON A DISTRICT BUT NOT NECESSARILY PEDANTIC... by Christ Bergstrom; until January • A NEW UNDERSTANDING: Portraits by Christ Bergstrom; until Dec. 5

KLAS UDELL GALLERY 10332-124 St (488-0700) • Works by Abe Morell; until Dec. 6 • BIZZY WALK Nov. 30

ONTON ART GALLERY See What's Happening Downtown

STRUM DESIGN STUDIO 12419 Stony Plain Rd (4702) • Open Tue-Fri 10am-5pm; Sat 10am-4pm • RETROACTIVE SHOW: Landscapes by Myrna Jell Collins; ceramics by Darlene Dolinsky, John Christian Barn; Paintings by James Trevelyan; glass by Jamie Lawrie; washi chigiri by Terry O'Connor; silver jewellery by Wayne Mackenzie, Janet John Blair; Peter McCay; wood boxes by John Henry Schlosser, Doug Haslam • Until Dec. 23

UNISON CENTRE GALLERY 2nd Fl University Center, 8303-112 St (492-3043) • Open Thu-Sun 10am-5pm; Sat 9:30am-4:30pm; Sun 9am-4pm • Works by Bonnie Scott; until Dec. 3 • Fine house and silent auction; Dec. 6 • Artworks indicating students; Dec. 6-21

ARTS BUILDING GALLERY Room 1-1, Fine Arts Bldg, 120 St, 89 Ave, U of A Campus (492-2081) • Tues-Fri 10am-5pm; Sat 2pm-5pm • Ad & Index: artworks by staff members of the department

Spans 11,000 years and 500 generations, people of the past and present, recordings, film, lights, artifacts and more. Permanent exhibit • THE NATURAL HISTORY GALLERY • BUG ROOM: Live invertebrate display.

Permanent exhibit • THE BIRD GALLERY mounted birds

Permanent exhibit • TREASURES OF THE EARTH Geology collection. Permanent exhibit • WILD ALBERTA GALLERY Permanent exhibit • A TO Z AT THE MUSEUM Every Sat (9am-11am): family-fun drop-in program

of art and design • Until Nov. 29

FOOT DOOR 10308-81 Ave (420-7253) • Open Mon-Wed 10am-6pm; Thur-Fri 10am-5pm; Sat 10am-6pm; Sun 12-5pm • Eskimo soapstone carvings (Inukshuk, bear) by J. Papagotik, West Coast Indian and Eskimo silver and gold jewellery by J. Sawyer • Until Dec. 30

FRINGE GALLERY B1m 10516 Whyte Ave (432-0240) • Open Mon-Sat 9:30am-6pm • ANDES JOURNEY Photographs and installation by Naomi Macdonald; until Nov. 29 • NEW EXPLORING PORTRAIT: IN SCENES AND PAINTINGS: Mixed media installation including artworks by Pearl Schremmer, Dawn McLean, Christine Wallenius, Mary Wright, Sidel Naess Briley, Nel Fieret, through December

GALLERIE DE JONGE 27022A Hwy 16a, Spruce Grove (962-9205) • Open Tue-Sun 11am-5pm; daytime by appointment • Work by local artists Beth Coulaas, Earl Cummings, Henry de Jager and Mary Masters

GIOARDINO GALLERY See What's Happening Downtown

HARCOURT HOUSE 10215-112 St (426-4180) • Open Mon-Fri 10am-5pm; Sat 12-4pm • SOUTH OF SIXTY: Artworks by artists from the Yukon. Curated by the Yukon Arts Centre's Scott Marsden • Until Dec. 20

JOHNSON GALLERY 7711-112 St (465-1617) • Open Mon-Fri 9am-5:30pm; Sat 5am-5pm • Christmas art fair: Artworks by over 60 artists; Nov. 29-Dec. 24

JOHNSON GALLERY 11817-80 St (479-8424) • Open Mon-Fri 9:30am-5:30pm; Sat 9:30am-4pm • CHRISTMAS ART FAIR: Artworks by Gallery artists • Nov. 29-Dec. 24

LATITUDE 53 See What's Happening Downtown

MCMILLAN GALLERY U of A Hospital, East Entrance, 8440-112 St (407-7152) • Open Mon-Fri 10am-8pm; Sat-Sun 1-8pm • THE BED SHOW: Handcrafted beds and furniture created by Susan Owen Kagan and Ken MacLean. In support of the Artists on the Wards program • Until Jan. 18

MCPAG MULTICULTURAL PUBLIC ART GALLERY 5411-51 St, Story Plant (963-2777) • Open 10am-4pm • MOTHER EARTH, FATTHOR SKY: Sculptures by Pat Strickland; fabric by Dorothy Clarke; until Dec. 1 • SKY FORMS: SKY AND PRAYME: Artworks by Dave Moore; Dec. 4-Jan. 5

MUSEE HERITAGE MUSEUM 5 St. Inner Street, St. Albert (459-1528) • SITTIN' PRETTY-LA FETE DES LOI-LETTES • Dec. 4-Feb. 2 • Open house: Thu, Dec. 4 (6:30-9pm)

NINA HUGGERT CENTRE FOR THE ARTS 9702-111 Ave (488-0255) • DECK THE WALLS: Artworks by adults with developmental disabilities

THE ORTONA GALLERY 9722-102 St (439-6943) • BY THE NUMBERS: Completed anonymous paint by numbers paintings from early '50s to the present, featuring two new paint by numbers by Marlene Wyman and Jimmy Golden to be completed during the opening reception by the attending public • Until Nov. 30 (Sat, Sun noon-5pm)

PROFILES PUBLIC ART GALLERY 19 Pier Street, St. Albert (460-4310) • Open Tue-Sat 10am-5pm; Thu 10am-8pm • PRESENCE IX: Show and fundraiser, sale of functional and decorative artworks • Opening reception in conjunction with the Downtown Light-Up: Thu, Dec. 4 (6:30-9:30pm) • Nov. 27-Dec. 24

PROVINCIAL MUSEUM OF ALBERTA 12845-102 Ave (453-9100) • Open: Sat-Thu 9am-5pm, Fri 9am-9pm • Teddy Bear's Back, Dec. 6-Feb. 16, 2004 • BIG THINGS 1: CLOTHES, FIREARM & FIREARMS IN ALBERTA Until Jan. 11 • BIG THINGS 2: Feathers & Scale sculptures by the artists of the North Edmonton Sculpture Workshop; until Apr. 30, 2004 • THE ROCKIE: Photographics of Wayne Gretzky; until Jan. 14 • SYNCNDRU CANADA ABORIGINAL PEOPLES GALLERY

Spans 11,000 years and 500 generations, people of the past and present, recordings, film, lights, artifacts and more. Permanent exhibit • THE NATURAL HISTORY GALLERY • BUG ROOM: Live invertebrate display.

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ROWLES AND COMPANY See What's Happening Downtown

SCOTT GALLERY 10411-124 St (488-3619) • Open Tue-Sat 10am-5pm • CHRISTMAS TREASURES • New artworks by Lynn Mainlin, Phyllis Anderson, Jim Stokes, Diane Moore, Angelique Gillespie and others • Nov. 29-December • GALLERY WALK Nov. 29-30

SEGHERS STUDIO GALLERY See What's Happening Downtown

SNAP GALLERY See What's Happening Downtown

SNOWBIRD GALLERY WEM, 8882-170 St (444-1024) • Work by L. Yardley-Jones and Gregg Johnson, acrylics by Jim Vest, pottery by Noboru Kubo and Jacqueline Steinberg

SPECTRUM ART GALLERY AND STUDIO 11745 Jaspe Ave (482-6677) • Open daily 10am-6pm • Paintings by Christopher Lucas, Patricia Young, Bridget Turner, Deanna Larson and David Phillips

VAAA GALLERY 3rd Fl, Harcourt House, 10215-112 St (431-1731) • SPUN: Artworks from handspun fibre by hand weavers, spinners and dyers of Alberta • Until Dec. 20

VANDERLEELIE GALLERY 10183-112 St (452-0286) • Open Tue-Sat 10am-5:30pm • Paintings by Sam Lam and photographic works by Wesley Anderson • Until Nov. 27

WALTERDEAL PLAYHOUSE 10322-83 Ave (434-7742/52-6209) • ART IN THE LOBBY: TRAVELS WITH WOLF AND LARRY: Artworks by Will Walker and Larry Judge • Until Nov. 29, Dec. 2-6 (7pm); Sun, Nov. 30 (1pm) • Non-patrons may come into the theatre to view the thoughts of those around him becomes a curse when those thoughts begin to take over his own • Until Nov. 30, Wed-Sun (8pm) • \$21 (adult)/\$16 (student/senior) • Tickets available at TIX on the Square

WEST END GALLERY 12308 Jasper Ave (488-4892) • Still life and figurative paintings by Joanne Gauthier; until Nov. 21 • Still life acrylic paintings by Niki Barton and Grant Leir; until Dec. 10 • GALLERY WALK Nov. 29 (10am-5pm)-Nov. 30 (12-4pm)

WORKS GALLERY See What's Happening Downtown

LITERARY

AUDREY'S BOOKS See What's Happening Downtown

STANLEY A. MILNER LIBRARY THEATRE See What's Happening Downtown

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA Room 1-22, Education South Building, U of A Campus (472-6835) • The Canadian Authors Association (Edmonton Branch) presents Andrew Nikiforuk, author of *Saboteurs*; Nov. 28 (8pm); \$10 • The Canadian Authors Association (Edmonton Branch) presents a workshop on writing for magazines with Andrew Nikiforuk; Nov. 29 (9:30am-4pm); \$30 (CAA members)/\$60 (non-member)

INDIANA BONES AND THE RETURN OF HELMUT SCHMELMUT Celebrations Dinner Theatre, Ossian Entertainment Hotel, 13103 Fort Rd (448-9339) • Dandified archaeologist Indiana Bones must save the day again when his arch rival Helmut Schmelmut reappears on the scene, once again bent on world destruction in this musical spoof of the *Raiders of the Lost Ark* series of adventure films • Until Jan. 31 (Sat 6:15pm, Sun 5:15pm) • \$43.95 (Wed, Thu, Sun)/\$49.95 (Fri, Sat)/\$20 (child 12 and under)/free (child under 2)

THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST Walterdale Playhouse, 10322-83 Ave (439-2845/420-1757) • Wendy Pope directs Oscar Wilde's classic 1895 comedy about a wealthy British layabout who becomes entangled in a web of aliases and fictitious friends during an eccentric social soirée • pair of prospective wives • Until Nov. 29, Dec. 2-6 (8pm); Sun, Nov. 30 (2pm); no show Dec. 1 • \$12.14 (adult)/\$10.12 (student/senior) • Tickets available at TIX on the Square

GILLIAN'S ISLAND Jubilations Dinner Theatre, WEM (484-2424) • A 100th anniversary revival of this parody of the '60s TV series *Gilligan's Island*, about a crew of hapless sailors and their mismatched passengers who are washed ashore on a deserted tropical island during a violent storm • Until Jan. 25 • Tickets available by phone at 484-2424

THE COMEDY FACTORY 3414 Gateway Boulevard (469-4999) • Roger Peltz; Nov. 27-29 • Bob Angel; Dec. 4-6

FARGO'S 10307-78 Ave (433-4526) • Fargo's Laugh-a-lot Comedy • Every Sun

STANLEY A. MILNER LIBRARY THEATRE See What's Happening Downtown

LIVE COMEDY

BLIND PIG PUB AND GRILL 32 St. Anne St., St. Albert • Every Sun (8pm): Sunday Night Funnies with Barbara May and guest

THE COMEDY FACTORY 3414 Gateway Boulevard (469-4999) • Roger Peltz; Nov. 27-29 • Bob Angel; Dec. 4-6

FARGO'S 10307-78 Ave (433-4526) • Fargo's Laugh-a-lot Comedy • Every Sun

STANLEY A. MILNER LIBRARY THEATRE See What's Happening Downtown

DOWNTOWN

BUDDY'S NITE CLUB 11725 Jasper Ave (488-6636) • Open 9:30-11pm: strip contests, go-go boys • Every Mon: Free pool. DJs Arrow Chaser, Jeff Pop, Code Red • No membership needed

DIGNITY EDMONTON (482-6845) Support community for lesbian Catholics and friends

DOWN UNDER 12224 Jasper Ave (482-7960) • Steamboat

EDMONTON RAINBOW BUSINESS ASSOCIATION (422-6207) • An organization for gay men and lesbians in business and their non-gay friends to share business knowledge, learn, make friends and network in a positive, proud space where being yourself is the norm

GAY AND LESBIAN COMMUNITY CENTRE OF EDMONTON (GLCC) See What's Happening Downtown

GAY MEN'S OUTREACH CREW (GMOC) See What's Happening Downtown

HIV NETWORK OF EDMONTON SOCIETY See What's Happening Downtown

ICARE See What's Happening Downtown

ILLUSION'S SOCIAL CLUB See What's Happening Downtown

INSIDE/OUT U of A Campus, www.ulberta.ca/cid/eps/AgeParade.htm

• Monthly meetings for campus-based organization for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) faculty, graduate student, academic, straight allies and support staff at the U of A to network and socialize in a supportive environment (faculty, staff, students, parents/guardians, spouses/partners/children/for info). Contact: Dr. Wells (kewells@ualberta.ca) or Marlene Westham (marlene.westham@ualberta.ca) for info.

THE ALBERTA TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION Edmonton Office (Barnett House); Conference: Sex-and-Gender Differences, Education, and Culture Conference III presented by ACAPE; Dec. 5-6

QUEER LISTINGS

AXIOS (454-8449) • A support group, local chapter of the International Organization of Eastern Orthodox and Eastern Rite Catholic Gay and Lesbian Christians

BOOTS AND SADDLES See What's Happening

CLUBS/LECTURES

COUNTING AND FINANCE FOR NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS See What's Happening

EDMONTON ASSOCIATION FOR BRIGHT CHILDREN Room: Alberta School for the Deaf, 6240-112 St, Edmonton; smrtonab.org • SAGE Review: Cited and saturated; it's a fine art; Sat, Nov. 29 (10am-noon); • Physics Building, U of A Campus (469-1206) • Discovery Group Series: Grades 5-9, Entering the Wonderful World of Nanotechnology; Sat, 5 (10am-noon); free for members, EABC wills are available; pre-register

EDMONTON PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT See What's Happening Downtown

INTERNATIONAL MARKETPLACE See What's Happening Downtown

ARTS WEEKLY

CLUBS/LECTURES

EDMONTON GUILD CHRISTMAS GIFT SALE The King's University College, 9125-50 St • Art, crafts, giftware, baking • Sat, Nov. 29 (10am-3pm) • \$1 • Proceeds support the work of the University College

THEATRE

AMADEUS See What's Happening Downtown

BETTER LIVING Timms Centre for the Arts, U of A Campus, 87 Ave, 112 St (492-2495) • Presented by Studio Theatre • Sandra Nicholls directs *Feeding the Birds* playwright George F. Walker's black comedy about a supposedly deceased patriarch who returns from the dead to resume control over his family • Nov. 27-Dec. 6 (8pm, 4:15pm) • \$18 (\$20 + \$1) (student/senior)/\$15 (adult) • Tickets available at TIX on the Square

BYE BYE BIRDS Arden Theatre, 5 St, Anne Street, 500 100th Street (411-1800) • Presented by Alberta Children's Theatre • Nov. 28-29, Dec. 5-6 (7:30pm); Nov. 30, Dec. 7 (2:30pm) • \$15 (adult)/\$10 (student/senior) • Tickets available at the Arden Theatre box office

CHIMPIMPROV The New Verscana Theatre, 10329-83 Ave (484-0695) • Open daily 10am-5pm: improvisational sketches performed by Rapin Fire Theatre's top improvisers • Every Sat (11pm) except last Sat of each month

A CHRISTMAS CAROL See What's Happening Downtown

DANCING WITH JAZZ See What's Happening Downtown

DI-E-NASTY Varscona Theatre 10329-83 Ave • Jeff Haslam, Stephanie Wolfe, Mark Meer, Josh Dean, Davina Stewart and Leona Brauns celebrate the 13th season of Edmonton's legendary live improvised soap opera by spoofing the '50s melodramas of Douglas Sirk and Grace Metalious • Every Monday (8pm)

DREAM LIFE Catalyst Theatre, 8559 Gateway Boulevard (431-1750/420-1757) • Presented by Catalyst Theatre and Azimuth Theatre • Jonathan Christensen directs *Moving Along* actor/playwright Chris Crookston's new one-man show, which takes place in a basement and explores the meaning of life and death as seen through the eyes of a man who is charged by God with the task of bringing merriment to the people, even in the face of terrible disease and devastation • Nov. 28-30, Dec. 4-7 (8pm); Sun, Nov. 30 (2pm); no show Dec. 1 • \$10 (adult)/\$7 (student/senior) • Tickets available at TIX on the Square

GILLIAN'S ISLAND Jubilations Dinner Theatre, 8621-91 St (469-8400) • A 100th anniversary revival of this parody of the '60s TV series *Gilligan's Island*, about a crew of hapless sailors and their mismatched passengers who are washed ashore on a deserted tropical island during a violent storm • Until Jan. 25 • Tickets available by phone at 484-2424

ROCKIN' VEGAS Mayfield Dinner Theatre, Mayfield Inn, 16615-109 Ave (483-4051) • A high-energy musical revue celebrating the music of Frank Sinatra, Elvis Presley, Liberace, Neil Diamond, Wayne Newton and other performers associated with Las Vegas • Until Feb. 22 • Tickets available at Mayfield Dinner Theatre box office

SHADOWPLAY Azimuth Theatre, 11315-106 Ave (420-1757) • Presented by Et Cetera Theatre Collective • Barbara French directs James Hamilton and Aaron Talbot in this experimental performance that uses dance and physical theatre to explore the complex, sometimes ominous relationship between people and their environment • Nov. 29 • \$8 (11pm) • Tickets available by phone at 448-0695

A WONDERFUL LIFE Kaesa Theatre, lower level Jubilee Auditorium (420-1757) • Presented by ELOPE • Randy Mueller directs; Gary Carter, Kevin Moen and Monica Lipscombe in Sheldon Harnick and Joe Raposo's musical version of Frank Capra's 1946 film *It's a Wonderful Life*, about the frustrated owner of a small-town savings and loan who rediscovers the joy of living when an angel grants his wish that he had never been born • Dec. 4-6; Dec. 11-13 (7:30pm); Dec. 7 (2pm) • \$20 (adult)/\$15 (student/senior) • Tickets available at TIX on the Square

SURVIVAL: THE IMPROVISATION GAME The Third Space, 11516-103 St (424-6304) • Live, competitive improvisational comedy with an "element of danger" • Nov. 28 • \$5 • Tickets available at phone at 448-0695

THEATRESPORTS Varscona Theatre, 10329-83 Ave (448-0695) • Presented by Rapin Fire Theatre • Teams of improvisors create a sketch comedy spot based on audience suggestions, and have the results evaluated by a team of heartless judges • Every Fri (11pm) • Tickets available by phone at 448-0695

membership needed

WOMEN'S COMING OUT GROUP See What's Happening Downtown

YOUTH UNDERSTANDING YOUTH See What's Happening Downtown

10329-B AVENUE (420-1757) • Presented by Alberta Opera • Farren Timoteo, Amber Bissonnette and Andrew MacDonald Smith star in Garner Butler and Jeff Unger's fanciful musical adaptation of the fairytale about a boy, a cow, a giant and a handful of magic beans • Nov. 27-Dec. 14, Thu-Sun (7pm), Sat-Sun (2pm) • \$8 (child 12 and under)/\$10 (student/senior)/\$15 (adult) • Tickets available at TIX on the Square

LOVE, SEX AND THE I.R.S. Leduc Performing Art Centre, 4308-50 St, Leduc (987-0278) • Presented by the Leduc Community Society • Marlene Schoonmaker directs William Van Zandt and the cast of the show • Nov. 28-29, Dec. 5-6 (7:30pm) • \$11-\$15 • Tickets available at Leduc Stage box office, TicketMaster

OH SUSANNA! The Verscana Theatre, 10329-83 Ave, www.varcontheatre.com/ohsusanna • Edmonton's live Euro-style variety show, featuring games, musical numbers and celebrity interviews, all presided over by international glamour-gal Susanna Patchouli and her co-host, Eros, God of Love • Sat, Nov. 29 (11pm)

RADIOFOLIES La Cité Françoise, 8621-91 St (469-8400) • Presented by L'UnitéThéâtre • The golden days of radio are revisited in this nostalgic French-language musical production, a recreation of the live radio broadcasts that maintained hometown morale during World War II • Nov. 27-30, Dec. 4-7 (8pm); Sun, Nov. 30 (2pm); no show Dec. 1 • \$10 (adult)/\$7 (student/senior) • Tickets available by phone at 497-4470

RED NOSES Theatre Lab, MacEwan Centre for the Arts, 10045-156 St (497-4470) • Presented by Grant MacEwan College • Peter Barnes' play, set in 14th-century France, is a dark comedy about a monk who is charged by God with the task of bringing merriment to the people, even in the face of terrible disease and devastation • Nov. 28-30 (2pm); no show Dec. 1 • \$10 (adult)/\$7 (student/senior) • Tickets available by phone at 497-4470

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WORLD POSSIBLE Remedy Cafe, 8631-109 St • Music, words and creative resistance; 7pm; \$5 (suggested donation), Wed Dec. 3

EDMONTON COALITION ON HOUSING AND ECOMH CONCERT St. Paul's Anglican Church, 11725-93 St (466-2626) • Music from nine local folk acts, a children's activity centre, raffle • Sun, Nov. 30 (4-8pm) • \$5 (admission/breakfast); children under 6 free • Admission: tickets available at: Ethel's Music, Urban Grind Coffee, Organic Roots Food Market, Second Cup (Milner Library downtown)

EDMONTON COLUMBIAN CHOIRS' SILENT AUCTION Good Shepherd Parish Hall, 18407-60 Ave (430-6806) • Nov. 29 (6:30pm cocktails, 7pm dinner) • \$20 (adult)/\$15 (student/senior) • Tickets available at phone at 448-0695

FLAVOURS OF ITALY See What's Happening Downtown

INDOOR SANTA CLAUS PARADE See What's Happening Downtown

THE KING'S GUILD CHRISTMAS GIFT SALE The King's University College, 9125-50 St • Art, crafts, giftware, baking • Sat, Nov. 29 (10am-3pm) • \$1 • Proceeds support the work of the University College

SEE PAGE 53



free will astrology

BY ROB BREZSNY



Mar 21 - Apr 18

Three decades ago, outmoded concepts of God seemed ready for retirement. No thoughtful person could buy into the fossilized delusion that the Divine Intelligence resembled a stern, prudish old man inclined to favour some groups of human beings over others. Since then, however, we have regressed. Literalist interpretations of the Bible and Koran have temporarily restored the supremacy of the Antiquated Cartoon Deity. More than ever, it's crucial that we overthrow that fake, Aries. Luckily, you're in a favourable phase to do your part in the noble work. I exhort you to dissolve obsolete images of God that stifle your relationship with the Real Thing.



Apr 20 - May 20

In her book *Writing Down the Bones*, Natalie Goldberg tells aspiring wordsmiths "Write from your obsessions. They're going to run your life anyway, so why not harness them?" That's good advice if you're an artist in any medium. The consuming fetishes and raging fantasies that threaten to drive you crazy can be converted into excellent raw material for your creative urges. But what if you're not a novelist or painter or musician or actor? How can you turn your obsessions into assets? Be alert for answers



DOWNTOWN BUSINESS ASSOCIATION
www.edmontondowntown.com

GALLERIES/MUSEUMS

ALBERTA CRAFT COUNCIL GALLERY 10185-106 St (488-6611/4808-5900) • Open Mon-Sat, 10am-5pm; Thu 10am-8pm (closed all hols) • **MAIN GALLERY: NEW WORKS IN WOOD**: Southern Alberta Woodworkers Society biennial exhibition; until Nov. 29 • **HOLIDAY CELEBRATION OF CRAFT**: Mixed media crafts; until Dec. 24 • **DISCOVERY GALLERIES HOLIDAY CELEBRATION OF CRAFT**, Sat., Nov. 28 (7-10pm); \$25, plus one night's fundraiser; Fri., Nov. 28 (7-10pm); \$25, plus one night's fundraiser; Sat., Nov. 29 (7-10pm); \$25 • **ONE NIGHT FUNRAISER**; Fri., Nov. 28 (7-10pm); \$25, plus one night's fundraiser; Sat., Nov. 29 (7-10pm); \$25 • **ARTS & CRAFTS**: Artisanal crafts; until Dec. 24 • **THREE NIGHTS OF FUN**: Artisanal crafts; until Dec. 24 • **WORKSHOPS**: Holiday workshop; Sat., Nov. 28 (7-10pm); \$25; plus one night's workshop; Sat., Nov. 29 (7-10pm); \$25; plus one night's workshop; Sat., Nov. 29 (7-10pm); \$25

ARTSHAW STUDIO GALLERY 3rd Floor, Kino Building, 10127-106 St (423-2966) • Open Thu-Sun 9pm or by appointment • Artworks by Ryan Brown, Jeff Collison, Aaron Pedersen, Tim Rechner, Paul Roberts, Gabriela Rosende, Greg Swan, Anna Szul, Eugene Uhuad, and others

EDMONTON ART GALLERY 2 Sir Winston Churchill Sq (422-2223) • Open Tue-Wed and Fri 10:30am-5pm; Thu 10:30am-8pm; Sat, Sun 11am-5pm; Closed Mon • **STORYBOARD**: Until Feb. 8 • **PUBLIC RELATIONS**: Carole Condie and Karl Bevordage, *Trans-Religious Journeys* Global Visionary Conference; Nov. 30-Jan. 7 • **THE OTHER LANDSCAPE**: Until Feb. 15 • **ART FOR LUNCH**: EATC Theatre, Art 21-4E in the 21st Century (part of PBS video series) featuring Identity; Thu, Nov. 27 • **CHILDREN'S GALLERY**: *BECOME* Curated by Don Moor • \$10/ST student/ senior; \$5 (children 12-17)/family (members; children 5 and under)

GHORANDI GALLERY 10080 Jasper Ave (429-5066) • Open Wed and Sat 12-4pm, anything by appointment • **SMALL WORKS SHOW** 2003: Artworks by gallery artists • Until Dec. 25

LATITUDE 53 10248-106 St (423-5333) • Open Tue-Fri 10am-5pm, Sat noon-5pm • **PROJEK ROOM: BLU-97 BOMBETS**: Mixed media installation by Elmer Whidden • **MAIN SPACE + UNINVITED GUESTS**: An ongoing collaborative project by Jean Francois Frost and Marie Suzanne Daniels • Until Dec. 25

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to this question. Cosmic forces are conspiring to bring you crisp new insights.



GEMINI

May 21 - June 21

As your mating season gets into full swing, I suggest you browse through a book called *Dr. Tatiana's Sex Advice to All Creation* by evolutionary biologist Olivia Judson. Your mind may be blown wide open as you learn how experimental some animals are in their approach to sex. You'll read, for example, about dolphins that try to copulate with turtles and seals, orangutans that masturbate with sex toys made of leaves and twigs, female chimpanzees that average 10 trysts a day with numerous lovers, homosexual romps among manatees, and female seahorses that impregnate their male partners. I'm hoping that by expanding your definition of what's "natural," you'll lose any shame you might still have about your own harmless though exotic erotic tastes.



CANCER

June 21 - July 22

This horoscope has been scientifically formulated to raise your spontaneity levels and condition you to thrive on the unexpected. Do not attempt to use logic to understand it. Like a Zen koan, it is meant to give your non-rational mind a workout, thereby preparing you for what cannot be prepared for. Here goes: *Find meaning in runaway shopping carts and flaming marshmallows. Seek silk and cashmere interventions in the midst of a secret test. Drum up feral breakfast conundrums with wicked, lickable angels. Welcome violins and snakes at the heart of the cool mistake. Scribble treasure maps on naked promises. Search for messages from the future in the warm glow of yesterday's shock.*



LEO

July 23 - Aug 22

You're the best antidote for all the unoriginal thinking that's going on around you. There may be other people who have the

power to overthrow the numbing status quo, but only you have the charm to do it in a graceful way that doesn't offend everyone and damage future collaborative efforts. So be a cheerful rebel, Leo. Unleash your iconoclastic fervor with the intention of making life more fun and interesting, not more annoyingly complicated.



VIRGO

Aug 23 - Sept 22

"Time porn" is defined by www.word-spy.com as "TV shows and other media that portray characters having excessive amounts of spare time, a thing we covet but cannot have." *Seinfeld* and *Friends* are especially obscene examples of this phenomenon. I'm hoping, Virgo, that in the coming weeks you will renounce any attraction you might have to this perverse form of vicarious enjoyment. Instead, fight and claw to procure for yourself the real thing: an abundance of free, unscheduled hours when you can sit around doing nothing in particular.



LIBRA

Sept 23 - Oct 22

The National Center for Atmospheric Research reports that the average cloud weighs the same as 100 elephants. I suggest you use this fact as a metaphorical touchstone in the coming week. Are there any situations in your life that seem insubstantial but are in fact quite massive? Can you think of any influence you regard as ethereal or feathery that might ultimately have the impact of a ton of bricks? This is the week you should check to see if outer appearances match up with what's inside.



SCORPIO

Oct 23 - Nov 21

So you decided to leave your comfort zone. You dared to scare yourself for a good cause. Having researched all the options, you found the skydiving school with the best safety record. Later, fully

trained, you felt reasonably confident as you went up in the plane and hurled yourself out the door into the emptiness. Hallelujah! Your parachute opened successfully. Your descent was smooth. Alas, at the last minute, a strong wind blew you away from your target and your chute got snagged on a tree. Now you're safe and sound but stranded high above the ground. What's next?



SAGITTARIUS

Nov 22 - Dec 21

The good news, say scientists at Sweden's University of Uppsala, is that global warming will never melt the ice caps or create endless summers in Toronto. That's because—here comes the bad news—oil and gas supplies will run out far sooner than expected. There's not enough of the stuff left on the planet for humans to create a dangerous excess of carbon dioxide. The scientists believe oil reserves are 80 per cent smaller than generally predicted, and will peak in 2010. Let this possible scenario serve as a stimulus for meditations about your long-term future, Sagittarius. What sources of energy, money and love that you now depend on may be gone in 15 years? What can you do to begin cultivating replacements? Visualize the life you'd like to be living in 2018, and start planting seeds you'll harvest then.



CAPRICORN

Dec 22 - Jan 19

"The abyss has its own rewards." Ancient Greek myth attributed this motto to Hecate, goddess of the crossroads and queen of the night. Can you imagine what those rewards might be, Capricorn? To prepare you for your adventure in the coming weeks, I suggest you brainstorm about them now. While you won't be descending all the way to the yawning pit at the bottom of the abyss, you will spend time in the middle and upper levels. Believe it or not, this will be a good thing.

It'll bring fantastic opportunities to shake off delusions, expose and heal repressive emotions and free yourself from bondage.



AQUARIUS

Jan 20 - Feb 18

In times past no one was allowed to study the Kabbalah until age 40, after having raised a family and gathered a wealth of life experience. The mystical doctrines were thought to be at best useless and worst dangerous to younger seekers. rule has now been waived, however, since this critical juncture in humanity's evolution, we need all the wise folk we can get, even at the risk of unhinging those who aren't ripe enough to apply the esoteric truths with integrity. I mention this, Aquarius, because the understandings you'll be exposed to in coming weeks would qualify you to study Kabbalah no matter what your age. You'll be offered chances to dramatically expedite your maturation, you've been emotionally stunted & deprived of learning adventures in every way, now's the time to fix that.



PISCES

Feb 19 - Mar 20

What seems like bad luck is not always caused by the whims of fate. Sometimes it's the result of dumb decisions and the consequences. Take the "Curse of the Bambino." It has supposedly prevented baseball's Boston Red Sox from winning the World Series since they got rid of future Hall of Famer Babe Ruth in 1923. But the real reason for Boston's enduring mediocrity is less occult: the racism of the owners. After Jackie Robinson finally integrated the game in 1949, they lagged behind in signing black players. Not until the 1990s did the Red Sox fully catch up with other teams. Let this be a good omen for your meditations, Pisces. Think about parts of your life that have been interfered from bad luck. Identify the events that are the true cause, and devise a forceful plan to dissolve the karma of



LITERARY

AUDREY'S BOOKS

10247 Jasper Ave (423-3487) • Book launch, Bert Almon reading from his book of poems *Restoration before Birth*, Thu, Nov. 27 (7:30pm) • Christian Bak reading from his book of poems *Crystallolithography*, Fri, Nov. 28 (7:30pm)

STANLEY A. MILNER LIBRARY THEATRE 3rd Floor, 10150 Jasper Ave (426-3322) • *THE LORD OF THE RINGS*: The Lord of the Rings, reading by Dr. Tracy Tolonen • *SNAPPY SATURDAY*: Family program, Sat, Nov. 29 (1-4pm); \$5 (supply fee for children) free for accompanying adults • Handprinted fabric printmaking workshop, Tues, Dec. 2 (6-9pm)

WORKS GALLERY Commerce Place, 10150 Jasper Ave (426-2122) • Open: Mon-Fri 11:30am-5:30pm • *FROST*: Edmonton contemporary furniture featuring artists and designers from IDEA (The Industrial Designers of Edmonton Association) • Nov. 24-Dec. 19 • Opening reception Nov. 27 (7-9pm)

CLUBS/LECTURES

ACCOUNTING AND FINANCE FOR NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS: Stanley Milner Library, Centennial Room (496-7034) • Workshop presented by Rupert Cassar • Free • Mon, Dec. 1 (noon)

EDMONTON'S PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT: McCauley Elementary/Junior High School, 9538-107 Ave (496-6095) • Discuss proposed proposed amendment to the Boyle Street/McCauley Area Redevelopment Plan and changes to the Zoning Bylaw, Ward 4 • Web: Dec. 3 (7pm)

THE INTERNATIONAL MARKETPLACE: Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers, 100, 10010-107A Ave (423-9683/423-9684) • Information sessions • Tues, Dec. 2 (9pm), Tues, Nov. 28 (2pm)

OPPORTUNITIES UNLIMITED NETWORKING GROUP: Edmonton Chamber of Commerce, 600, 10123-99 St (426-4620) • *Franchise Fit* de Germain presents *A Different Way* to Network, Fri, Nov. 28 (2pm)

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LUMINARIA 2003 Devon Botanic Garden, Hwy 51, 1 km north of Devon on Hwy 60 (987-2602). The Kurimoto Japanese Garden lit by candlelight, horse-drawn carriage rides, storytellers, displays, and music. By University of Alberta Mixed Chorus • Sun, Dec. 7 (5-9pm) • \$8 (adult)/\$5 (child 5-12)/children 4 years and under free.

WELL FEMME: BEST OF HERLAND FEMINIST FILM FESTIVAL See What's Happening Downtown

COMMUNITY FESTIVAL OF TREES Transalta Leisure Centre, Spruce Grove (963-8779) Transalta Leisure Centre, Spruce Grove (963-8779) • Presented by the Tri Community Foundation for Health and Wellness and the Multicultural Heritage Centre • Dec. 4-7 • Gala opening: Dec. 4, \$50; Dec. 5-7, \$20

CLASSIFIEDS

If you want to place your Classified ad in VUE Weekly please phone Carol at 426-1996. Deadline is noon the Tuesday before publication.

business opportunities

Watkins

Gourmet Ingredients, gift assortments and heritage medicinals. Free delivery and catalogues. Ask me how to earn free products at your home party. Cheryl at 455-5122 or email clbuddzinski@shaw.ca

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education

LIVE YOUR DREAM, start today, apply for the March 04 Dramatic Arts Program. The Vancouver Academy of Dramatic Arts www.vadastudios.com 1-866-231-8232

for sale

POOL TABLES Gold Oak, slate, 1st Italian slate, Leather Pockets. Installed (within city). LEISURE TIME PRODUCTS 987-4666

NEW "A" STYLE HARD SHELL MANDOLIN CASE \$75.00 Firm. Ph Carol 426-1996.

rental space

Nice rental space for workshop on Whyte Ave. \$25/hour. 432-0375

A VERY MERRY MURDER Multicultural Heritage Centre, 5411-51 St, Stony Plain (963-2777) • Murder mystery dinner • Sat, Nov. 29 (6:30pm) • \$40.

KARAOKE

AVENUE PIZZA 8511-112 St (432-0536) • Every Thu (9:30pm)

B-STREET PUB 11818-111 Ave (414-0545) • Every Wed-Sun (9pm); with Brad Scott

BILLY BOB'S SPORTS BAR Continental Inn, 16625 Stony Plain Rd (484-7751) • Every Thu (9pm): Musica Thursdays: Music Trivia with Escapade Entertainment • Every Fri/Sat (9:30pm); with Escapade Entertainment

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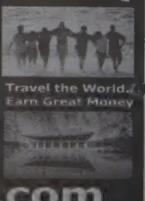
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alt sex column

BY ANDREA NEMERSON

Buzz bin

Dear Andrea:

I read your column where the New Age-y guy was lambasting you for recommending Fukuiko. While I didn't agree with much of what he says, the Fukuiko is a big rip-off. I bought one after reading about how it was so quiet and unobtrusive—and it is. But it's also just numbing and not nearly strong enough. Everybody likes something different, but I finally bought a Hitachi and will never go back. It's really loud and awkward, but it causes major "wife-writhing action." I have quite a few toys and haven't found a vibe yet that is both quiet/unobtrusive and powerful enough. Hey, maybe you can find one and recommend it to your readers.

Love, Unbuzzed

Dear Buzz:

I could try. Hell, it probably wouldn't even cost me anything, as people are always trying to send me sex toys I don't even want, many of which frighten me. But honestly, what would be the point? You said it yourself: everybody likes something different.

For someone like the original questioner's wife, who was easily pushed over the edge by some unassisted finger-strumming, the tiny toy could well be enough. For someone who needs a great, galumphing jackhammer of a machine like the Hitachi, clearly not.

Love, Too Much

Talk about a fast woman

Dear Andrea:

My girlfriend's clitoris is large and very sensitive. She reaches orgasm very quickly, after which any type of stimulation or penetration is very painful to her. If she reaches orgasm during intercourse we have to stop before I can reach orgasm and I end up having to masturbate. When she reaches orgasm during oral sex she asks me to wait a while before intercourse, but even then she frequently tells me to stop and my feeling that she is enduring rather than enjoying makes the experience impossible for me to enjoy. I've asked her to speak with someone about this, but she doesn't feel comfortable talking about it.

Love, Too Much

Dear Much:

Now this is an interesting problem. Have you tried positions which allow little clitoral stimulation? Maybe doggy-style with her up on her knees, not flat on the bed, no touching allowed? This is so exactly the opposite of my usual advice that I can't help thinking it could help. Otherwise, it's all in the rescheduling: do all the heavy petting you can manage without any clitoral stimulation, then do stuff that'll get you off (maybe intercourse 'till she says stop, then a blowjob), then do her. I'm also tempted to suggest one of those numbing creams. Sex mavens are always yelling at people not to use them, but it's not like they're dangerous; they're mostly just silly. The worst thing that could happen using something designed to make you not feel anything is you don't feel anything. It wears off.

Love, Andrea ♀

How come?

Dear Andrea:

My girlfriend cannot climax at all during intercourse. She has no problems while masturbating and orally. She says none of her exes ever could make her and she's just accepted it. I have always had women climax with me during intercourse and feel it is the best experience.

It's a downer to put out two plates of

Andrea Nemerson writes and teaches in San Francisco. You can e-mail her a question at andrea@altsexcolumn.com.

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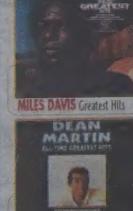
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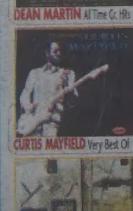
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